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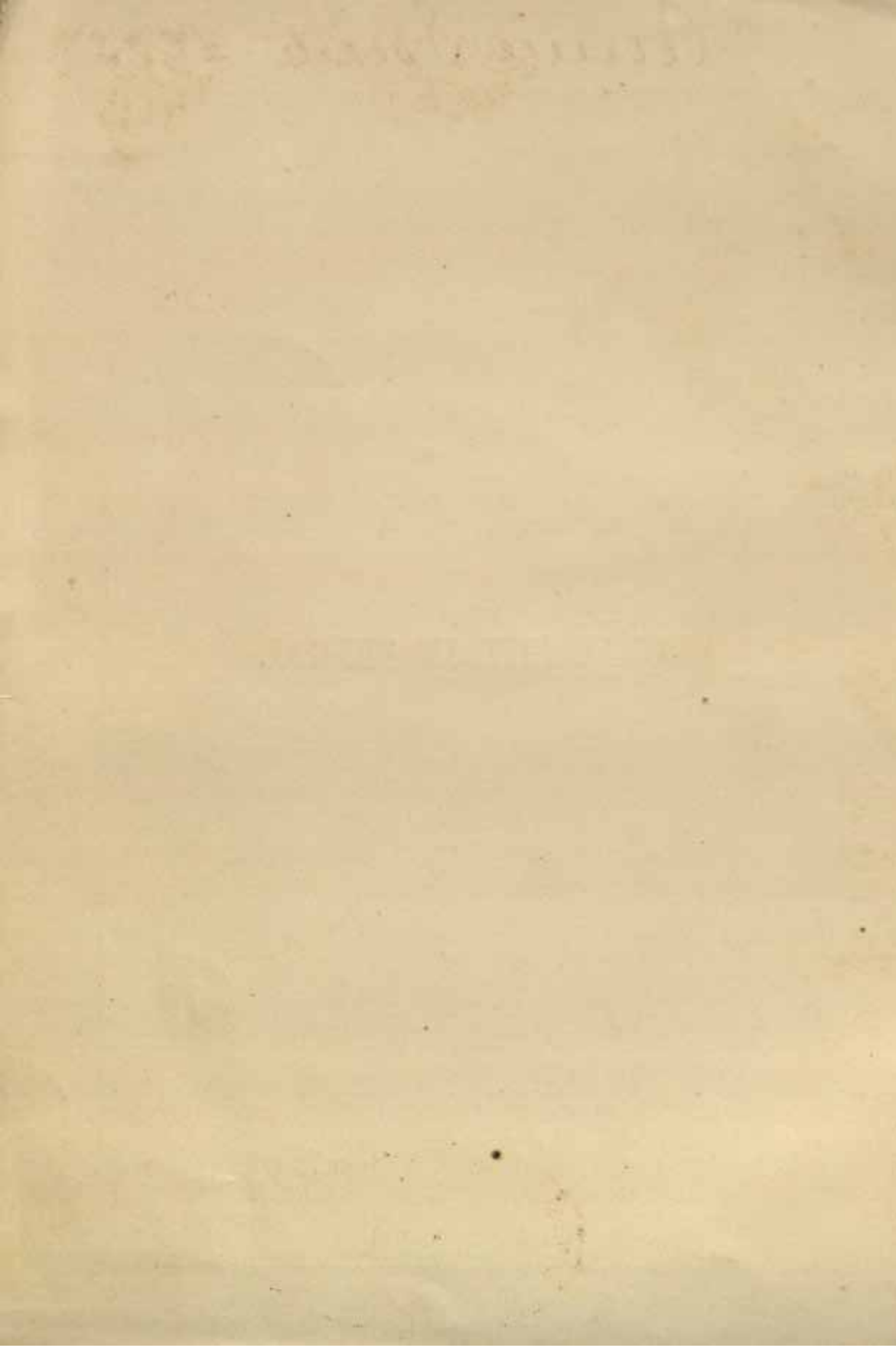
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RURAL LIFE IN BENGAL.









## MAP OF



# RURAL LIFE IN BENGAL;

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

Anglo-Indian Suburban Life;

~~A.N.~~  
~~6385~~

MORE PARTICULARLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE PLANTER AND PEASANTRY,  
THE VARIED PRODUCE OF THE SOIL AND SEASONS; WITH COPIOUS DETAILS  
OF THE CULTURE AND MANUFACTURE OF INDIGO.

9351

LETTERS FROM AN ARTIST IN INDIA TO HIS SISTERS IN ENGLAND.

By the Author of

"ANGLO-INDIAN DOMESTIC LIFE,"  
"ROUGH NOTES OF A ROUGH TRIP TO RANGOON,"  
ETC.

*Colesworthy Grant.*



Illustrated with One Hundred and Sixty Six Engravings.

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TO  
MY SISTERS

In England,

THESE LETTERS

ARE

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.







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DRAWN BY THE AUTHOR.

ENGRAVED BY J. AND G. NICHOLLS.

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## PREFACE.

THE following Letters—with two exceptions—were written about five years ago. Travel and pressing duties long delayed their publication; whilst the desolating insurrection of the past twenty months, spreading its leaden pall over the face of the country—carrying bereavement to countless homes—and banishing nearly every thought but that of the one terrible drama—the all-absorbing romance of reality around, in which every Christian seemed called upon to play some part, however petty or remote, may well be supposed to have extinguished for the time nearly all interest in any subjects less exciting than the alarms—the carnage, and the din of war. But the hydra-spirit of Revolt is now crushed;—"Rebellion is rebuked;"—faint and more faint becomes the sound of strife—hushed by the gentle tones of womanly and royal mercy. Returning Peace, with Spring's "ethereal mildness," now resumes her wonted smile,—and like the loosened Dove of old, in search of resting for its feet—alights once more on our deserted plains, to "make fair weather in this blustering land."

Thus protected and encouraged, and trusting to the liberality of his Queen's "Amnesty" to include free pardon for *his* offences also, the Author ventures to bring in this petty tribute to Her Courts of Peace.

During the protracted interval which has thus elapsed, however, even the great storm and strife of Mutiny, at which one-half the world has gazed in wonder, was insufficient to keep down smaller disputations nearer home; and hence, upon returning to his task, the Author found that he, too, had wandered into disputable fields. The question touching Indigo—the Planters, and the Ryuts, discussed fully thirty years ago, had been by different parties twice revived,—augmented, and swollen into controversy. For himself, however, the Author finds nothing to lament in this. It has

enlarged his information and his views, without affecting his design, which it was unnecessary to disturb by anachronisms. This design—apart from under purposes that fear no scrutiny—was manifestly not controversial, but descriptive and pictorial. It will hardly be supposed, therefore, that he would have selected a subject for his pictures, intended to please the feminine eyes and gentle spirits of his sisters, with any conception that all his “pretty houses” and “Noah’s-arcs and things” were convertible, by a sort of phantasmagorial shifting, into “whitened sepulchres” and ghastly skeletons. It is with the hope that his picture has no such destructibility of element within, that he does not now anticipate such a fate by committing it at once to the fire; as he assuredly would do if he thought himself in danger of being found, in the forcible language of Scripture,—“fighting against God,”—that is drawing Utopian pictures of the relationship between the strong and the weak, and, by so doing, glossing over the state of the poor with false impressions as to their condition,—their wants—their sufferings, and their claims.

With one thing elicited in course of the dispute, the Author has been so greatly struck, that he ventures prominent re-allusion to it, as commentative on that one great evil which he cannot but regard as *chief* in its oppressive operation on the poor,—although, strange to say, it has been, of all things, *least dwelt upon*,—i. e., the infamous system of *Dustoorce*. A writer, whose position and character lend all possible weight to his enquiries and opinions, declares that it is universally assumed in one district (Pubna), that the Ryuts retain but a *half*—or *third*—or *less than a third* of the advances paid to them,—the chief, or a large portion, being absorbed by the Factory Establishment!—Let imagination but transport this iniquity to British shores! What would the workmen in the Royal Dockyards, or elsewhere, say, (or *do*), if *two-thirds* of their emoluments from contract work were abstracted from their pay by the officers commanding them?

If such a system, then, and to such extent—nay, if but one half,—exist upon our Indian fields, how little wonder is there that the poor should groan;—and how much wonder if the Government and Educational philanthropist together are not encouraged five-fold to pursue their efforts for that gradual elevation of the minds of the peasant classes which shall “give sight to the blind,” and



enable them to slip the yoke of bondage to systems of craft and villainy which impoverish and debase them.

If (to use a modern phrase) ventilation be of service to the cause of truth, the Author, whilst pursuing his own object, will rejoice if he has lent one iota of aid to its establishment. In all that trenches upon matters in dispute—describing principally what he saw,—and, in those things which he could *not* see, taking his information from sources deserving implicit confidence, he believes himself secure from all charge of partiality. Not intending to be Essayist, he has written simply of things which fell under his observation and enquiry, within the limits of his design; but he has not *avoided* any subject from fear or consciousness of its being dangerous to the “prettiness” or smoothness of his delineations. In short, his desire in publishing has not been to exalt individuals, or to paint “faultless monsters whom the world ne’er saw”—but to place the conduct which it was his gratification to witness, and which he believes to be so well worthy of imitation, in the light of that wholesome *example* which is more persuasive than *precept*,—and more reclamatory than *reproof*.

The Author indulges the hope and belief, therefore, that he shall be found enlisted under the banners of the poor. He merely reserves to himself the privilege of fighting after his own fashion. Deprived of this hope and this privilege, he can only say that the following pages would, in his mind, lose half the inducement for their publication.

In conclusion—with no fresh experience to bring into the field, he has no necessity to re-open angry questions,—and earnestly hopes that he will not be the means of re-awakening angry discussion—upon interests which he is sure are infinitely better served by friendly *coalition* than by *dispute*. If to rural scenes belong—“Peace and content, twins of the sylvan shade,” and—

“Bless’d seclusion from a jarring world”—

it were pity they should furnish theme for discontent or strife. There, in the midst of the people, and, generally, acquainted intimately with their language, live the Planter and the Missionary; and who so capable of being the expositors of that truth which no righteous mind would stifle, or of advancing those

interests which no true English heart but must desire to see improved? It may well be added, who so hardened as to defy the fearful denunciations of the Almighty against the oppressor of the poor?"—"For the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them."

May the Missionary and the Planter be seen united more closely in the bonds and strength of that friendly unity which ought to work out alike temporal comfort and eternal prosperity to the countless poor of this vast—this 'wide wide' land!

CALCUTTA, 1859.



STEM OF INDIGO.



MULNATH HOUSE.

*Mulnath, January 10th.*

MY DEAR SISTERS,

Ill health has warranted that which inclination and an old standing invitation have long tempted, and I thus find myself once more located at the delightful residence of my kind friend, Mr. J— F—, in one of the handsomest dwellings, and I take it one of the most pleasing and healthy localities in Lower Bengal.

Whilst here, I purpose not to be idle, or unmindful of you, but, in fulfilment of that "good boy" promise I made, never to neglect addressing you when practicable, by our monthly mails, to relieve the dull monotony of our usual Calcutta budget by an endeavour, at least, to entertain you with a description of all I have seen, and may hereafter see, of mofussul, or suburban life, during my trip and sojourn here; more particularly connected with the production of an article which forms one of the principal and most interesting commodities of Bengal—*indigo*, of which I am led to believe two-thirds of our friends in England know little more than this—that it is a blue dye—brought from abroad—employed to colour broadcloth, and by the washerwomen at home, in little balls, wherewith to "blue" their



linen. Should I succeed in attaching to the subject, and many other matters connected with it, any greater amount of interest in your estimation than these meagre facts are calculated to excite, my end and desire will be attained.

In order, however, that you may "go with me," and so be afforded the opportunity of seeing whatever may be likely, from its novelty, to interest you on the way, it may be as well to begin with the beginning,—that you should know, in short, how I *got* here, as some little introduction to what may be *seen* here.

As those who follow must needs be behind, and we are dependent on the great emporium of science for every advance we make in our social condition, as connected with the arts, commerce, and manufactures, not for the example merely, but very frequently, and very considerably (in almost all undertakings of magnitude), for the ways and means of carrying them out, you will readily conclude that our progress in the greatest of all modern revolutions—that of travelling—has not kept pace with the gigantic strides of the mother country. *Imprimis*, we have no railways, though we *are* to have, and that probably within a couple of years, for already have the plummet and the line been laid to the ground; already have miles of country been surveyed, levelled, and cleared of the dwellings and little plantations of the wondering, and often, I fear, though temporarily, distressed natives, whilst our Indian Southwark, quiet Howrah, on the opposite side of the river, facing Calcutta, the intended terminus of the first rail, already exhibits, in demolished houses and uprooted trees, the energetic march of the great work. What *your* next step is to be, who shall conjecture? but we are at least endeavouring to be shortly at your heels in *this*.\*

In the meantime we cannot be called backward in the one other great locomotive means. Independently of five government steam-boats, which at variable intervals run between Calcutta, and the north-west provinces and Assam, we have two inland steam navigation companies, on, probably, as large a scale as any similar independent association in England. The first and oldest of these, which is called the "*India General Steam Navigation Company*," was established nine years ago, and, at the present time, has five running steamers, which tow as many cargo flats. The other company, termed the "*Ganges Steam Navigation Company*," employ a similar number of gigantic steamers, which, being cargo-boats and steamers in one, are enabled, at that period of the year when the rivers are full and afford a favourable channel, to make the more rapid passages, but, during the hot and dry season, when their beds are shallow, the advantage is on the side of the smaller vessels and floats of the other company, which can travel by routes

\* Four years have elapsed since the above was written, and our railway now extends, and has been opened from Howrah to Ranegunge, a distance of 121 miles. A traveller, therefore, proceeding by the author's route, would now, most probably, take the train from Howrah to Chinsurah, there join his boat and thus save upwards of one day's time and patience; exchanging a dull, comfortless, wearisome pull of possibly fifteen hours in a boat, for the stirring, novel, and easy flight by land of one hour and a half.

inaccessible to vessels of heavier draught. Thus the advantages are probably balanced.

The vessels of both companies, however, carry goods and passengers to Allahabad,\* and all those intermediate stations which the season of the year permits their passing; for, during four months of the year, the Bhāgruttee and Jellinghee rivers, the two principal streams or mouths of the Ganges, which unite the Hooghly with that great river, become so shallow in parts as to compel the inland steamers to go *down* the Hooghly instead of *up* it, and to gain an entrance into the Ganges through some of the circuitous and numerous sea-fed channels of the wild and tiger-haunted Soonderbunds. The journey, which to Allahabad, at the favoring season, occupies about seventeen or eighteen days, is thus prolonged to probably twenty-five or more.

Persons, then, who during the dry season require to visit river-stations which the Soonderbund route does not embrace, must therefore, abandoning the steamers, avail themselves of one of the three other means of transit yet remaining. A traveller in haste, with but trifling luggage, would, no doubt, under such circumstances, avail himself of either the *Government Dāk*, or one of the "*Inland Transit Company*" equirota! carriages. The former method, as you most probably are already aware, is that of a palkee, or palanquin, and bearers, relays of whom are placed at stated distances of eight miles or so on the road, and travel throughout the night as well as the day.



THE EQUIROTA! CARRIAGE.

The Equirota! Carriage is a very late introduction indeed, and derives its name from the four wheels being of equal dimensions. The design of this conveyance, it appears, originated in a suggestion by our then Governor-General, Lord Ellenborough, for a vehicle upon two wheels, which could be used to accelerate our mails about the country. Upon this idea Mr. Cameron, coach manufacturer of Calcutta, projected the present equirota!, the design of which was that it should be drawn, not by horse or horses, but men, or dāk bearers; that it should be so light in its construction that on coming to any part of a journey where the road—or the absence of a road—did not

\* This would be more properly Ullahabad, but the word being now Anglicised, I have retained the ordinary spelling.



admit of a carriage, the wheels should unship, and, with their axles, be no heavier than the customary load for a banghy bearer, or porter, and thus be carried on; whilst in their stead the usual poles should be inserted at either end, so that the bearers could carry the whole machine as an ordinary *dāk palkee*. This idea has, however, been abandoned, and the equirotal is now confined to its wheels. The mode in which it is drawn depends upon the character of the road. On what is called the Grand Trunk Road, or Benares New Road, horses are employed; on roads not metalled they are generally drawn by men, and in some few instances, by bullocks.

The majority of our metalled, or, to use the native phrase common in India, “puckah” roads, are, I believe, those leading to civil and military stations. But much has been done, I am assured, through other than government means. In the districts of Kishnaghur and Jessore much good, it is declared, has been done by the planters, more particularly in connection with the Ferry Fund Committee, of which they are said to be the most useful members; and in the neighbourhood of their own factories they have established many miles of excellent road.

Persons not in such haste as to require this mode of transit, or families carrying much luggage or furniture, may prefer the old-fashioned mode of travelling by boat, the character, size, and comforts of which will depend upon the means of the travellers. I need only name such as are commonly used by Europeans.



THE PINNACE.

The *Pinnace*, the largest and handsomest, is perhaps more frequently a private than a hired boat—the property of the planter or merchant. When hired in Calcutta it is, I believe, more used for family pleasure trips, or very short journies, than for any lengthy travel, as its hire is expensive. In size this vessel may vary from twelve to twenty tons burthen, and from forty to fifty feet in length. It is rigged something after the fashion of a schooner; has two rooms, besides bathing closets; carries large sails, and



a crew of probably twelve or fifteen men, who of course ply their oars when there is no wind to bring the sails into use.

The *Bujra* is a large and commodious, but generally cumbrous and sluggish boat, having more pretensions to comfort than speed; nevertheless it is frequently used for up-country journeys.



THE BUJRA.

The *Bhouliya* is a lighter description of the same character of boat, varying in its dimensions from the size of a medium *bujra* to that of our



THE BHOULIYA.

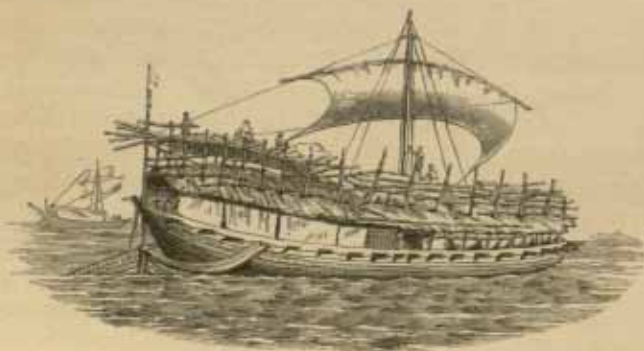
common *dengee*, or passage-boat. It is of general utility, and suitable, according to its size and the number of hands you may be pleased to engage for it (from four to eight, or, in the larger kind, even twelve,) for all

occasions, from a short suburban trip to an up-country journey; to convey a party to the Honourable Company's Botanic Gardens, or as a more genteel and comfortable, though it is not thought by any means a *safer*, conveyance for a lady when crossing the river than the common dengee.

The planter's boat is generally of this nature, but larger, longer, and a better pulling and sailing boat than the ordinary Calcutta bhouliya. The crew may be found to consist of some of the field labourers, who, during certain months of the year, have probably no agricultural duties to occupy them, and are thus enabled profitably to bestow their time on other employment.

All Indian boats, though built, adapted, and provided for rowing, are *sailing* boats; and being round, or flat at the bottom, having no keels, are of course very liable, if caught in a squall, or through carelessness falling into the trough of rough water, to be overturned. Hence, in a great measure, the frightful extent of casualties on the river during some of our sudden squalls and terrible nor'-west gales. Upon the last melancholy occasion in my remembrance, upwards of thirteen European, and eighty native lives, were declared to have been lost. As to the native boatmen, what with their carelessness or venturesomeness, so strangely at variance with the general timidity of the natives of Bengal—an inconsistency which must, I imagine, be referred to their fatalism—the only wonder would be if these accidents did *not* occur.

Next to these, the more respectable class of boats I have named, may be mentioned two or three of an inferior description. The *Putlee* (or *Kutoru*), or Baggage-boat of Hindostan, is a very large flat-bottomed, clinker-built, unwieldy-looking piece of rusticity, of probably one thousand muns (or, *Anglice*, maunds), which is about thirty-five tons burthen; but occasionally they may be met with double this size. They are used principally for carriage of cotton and other up-country produce.



THE PUTLEE.

Families in middling or narrow circumstances, journeying to the upper provinces, avail themselves of boats of this description, and hitherto the

government, for want of sufficient boats of its own, has frequently employed them for the transit of troops from the provinces to the Residency, or elsewhere. Frequent fatality, I believe, attended these transports, and of course great loss of time, so that during the late Burmese war, which occasioned a drain upon Bengal, by the transfer of several steamers and troop-boats from the Ganges to the Irrawaddy river, government availed itself of the services of the Steamers and Flats of the private inland steam companies of which I have already spoken.

The *Pulwar* is a smaller description of native travelling boat, of neater build, and less rusticity of character, sometimes used by a single traveller of humble means, and at others serves as *cook-boat* and accommodation for servants accompanying one of the large kind of boats I have already named.



THE PULWAR.

Now, that you may form some idea of the relative merits of these several conveyances, I will just state that a journey to—say Allahabad—the furthest station to which the steamers run; the estimated distance being 800 miles, generally occupies these steamers about 20 days. The charge for a first-class passage (exclusive of diet, which is 3 Roopees per diem) is 200 Rs., and you are allowed twelve muns of luggage, or a little more than 8 cwt. The cost for the like journey by the government dāk, and the least expensive route of 572 miles, is 250 Rs. 4 annas, or about 8 annas (one shilling) per mile. You must provide your own palkee—or hire one—and are under the necessity of giving three days notice of your intended journey. Until very lately, in addition to the cost of the dāk, you were also under the necessity of making a further deposit of 125 Rs. for possible *demurrage*, which was returned at the conclusion of the journey. This *demurrage* money being abolished, you have now to make the lesser deposit of 250 Rs., or £25, before undertaking a length of journey which you folks at home can accomplish in twenty-four hours, at a cost of a little more than as many shillings as here it requires pounds.



In this mode of travelling you are allowed eight bearers, two banghy burdars, or luggage carriers, each carrying 48 lbs. weight, and two musalchees, or torch-bearers,—an essential convenience and protection through a country where mud and water, ditches and jungle, interrupt your path, and tigers, possibly, prowl upon its margin. These beasts, you are no doubt aware, have a wholesome dread of fire, which they will not approach. If, however, your luggage be light—within the weight which can be carried by one man—and the character of the road be such as not to need the services of more than a single musalchee, the expense of the journey can be proportionately lessened. But how will such journeying strike your western imaginations? Yet in no better fashion have hundreds of poor timid, delicate ladies, confined to this box-like conveyance, with no protector, no fellow-traveller, no country inns, or village cottages to cheer the way, traversed for five and six hundred miles the sandy plains, the swampy fields, and jungly paths of India; resting during the day and the night just as long as may have been arranged for when starting—perhaps four or five hours—by halting at the dāk bungalows, or post-stage houses. These are situated at various distances, probably thirteen or fourteen miles from each other. In these buildings will be found in attendance three resident servants, a khansaman, a bearer, and a sweeper. The first prepares whatever food he may be directed to purchase on your behalf, and the second acts as a sort of valet, or general personal attendant. For all this accommodation and service you pay one roopee for the day, or, if your stay be under three hours, half that amount.

The charge for the same journey by the equirota horse carriage for a single traveller is 88 Rs.; for two inside seats, 147 Rs.; or, for two inside and one outside passenger, 191 Rs. Twenty seers, or 40 lbs. of luggage, are allowed to each person, and the journey occupies about a week, during which the traveller stops for refreshment at the usual dāk bungalows.

With respect to this mode of conveyance, which bids fair rapidly to supersede the old palkee dāk travelling, I may add that it is not free from liability at least, however seldom they may happen, to some of those mishaps incidental to old-fashioned road travelling in all parts of the world, such as running off an embankment, bad roads, and accidents to horses, vehicle, or harness. But instead of horses being used, the same vehicle can be engaged propelled by twelve men, lessening, of course, the probability of accident, and with it the speed of journey, but seriously increasing the cost, which, for this mode of transit is 248 Rs.\*

\* 1858. Since the opening of our rail, the "Transit Company" have shifted *their* station, and now start their carriages from Raneegunge, the present terminus of the np-train. But for the Santal insurrection in the first instance, and the present terrible revolt in the next, the terminus might by this time have been 150 miles further. There are now two transit associations. That called the "Hindustan Horse Dāk Company" undertakes to carry a traveller from Raneegunge to Allahabad in four days and a half; and for an entire carriage charges 172 rupees for the trip.

In travelling by boat it is imperative that you provide yourself with whatever you may require for consumption as food, beyond fowls, fish, and eggs. Meat of no kind (unless, possibly, now and then it be a little kid) is obtainable on the journey, except when stopping at the principal military or civil stations. If your halting-place be a Hindoo village, you cannot procure even fowls, which are not killed by the Hindoos. A supply of milk and eggs, however, for the day may generally be obtained from some of the villages on the bank, and of bread from the various factories which may chance to be found *en route*, though even these things are not obtained without occasional difficulties.



HARDOO GURT.

The expense of a journey to Allahabad by one of the large and better boats—either the *bujra* or large *bhouliya*, manned probably by twelve hands, varies from 65 Rs. to 180 Rs., and occupies the traveller more than two months. The expense is, of course, the same whether the boat be occupied by a single person or a whole family. Upon that description of native boat, the *putéelee*, I have already described, a Mr. Brierly, boat agent at Futtighur, has, I am told, improved, by constructing an addition to its accommodation, so that it resembles a *bujra*. It is said to be a very comfortable boat for travelling, but terribly slow; it is pulled by twelve men, and the cost depends upon its size. The charge is 3 Rs. for every hundred muns burthen (or about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  tons). The men are paid at the rate of 4 Rs. each per month, and there is an extra man, termed a *gooliya*, a kind of coxswain of the boat, paid at the same rate. Supposing, therefore, the vessel to be of medium size—say three hundred muns—the total cost would be about 145 Rs. With the ordinary *putéelee*, however, and fewer men, and therefore slower pace, the Calcutta boat agents undertake to have you conveyed to Allahabad, at a



charge of about 73 Rs., in two months and a half.—After all this you may imagine how we pray for railways!

Thus, then, I need hardly tell you, that few persons in the present day, except those in needy circumstances, patronise the old boat system of travelling for long journeys. For short trips, however, or to places not in the route of steamers or transit carriages, and whither the cost of the government *dāk* may be prohibitive, no other resource is open; and this brings us to the place from whence I proposed to start.

This shall be one of our *ghāts*, or landing-places, where boats “do congregate,” and, as perhaps the most commonly frequented, we will select that known as *Baboo's Ghāt*, which is a flight of steps leading to the water's edge, surmounted by a neat, pillared, porch-like edifice, built by a native gentleman, whose name it bears, and shrouded by a very fine peepul tree, which the pious Hindoos, more particularly the women, returning from their morning ablutions in the river, may be seen to water from the brass *lota*, or vessel, which invariably accompanies them.

Now as the journey hither is of no great length, and two-thirds of it only can be performed by water, you may suppose that I engage neither pinnace nor *bujra*, but that comfort and economy are sufficiently obtained by hiring a small *bhouliya*—or, what is more likely at a fine-weather season like this, a small native *punsóee*, which, with a double set of hands, or four oars, is a lighter and much quicker boat. It is longer, broader, and sharper than the Calcutta *dengee*, which, as I have already mentioned, is the common passage-boat of the river, over which boat the *punsóee* has another advantage—that of its admitting the boards which form its deck under the *chappa*, or matted roof, to be removed, so as to permit of a person sitting therein after the fashion most convenient to Europeans.



THE DENGEE AND PUNSÓEE.

As to the *dengee*, I trust that its days, as a ferry-boat at least, are numbered. It was with no little gratification that people saw, after many struggles, and much delay, the establishment of a small *steam ferry-boat* between Calcutta and the opposite shore of Howrah, whither so many

hundreds of poor people have daily occasion to cross.\* None who have witnessed the crowds of these poor creatures, whom the cupidity of the boatmen induce to cross at one time, and whose poverty compels them to avail themselves of the cheapest transit, but will heartily wish success to the little steam ferry, the expense of which, to the native, has been brought within the means of the poorest,—to that sum, in short, charged by the dengee wallahs, or boatmen,—viz., half a pice, which is something less than a farthing. Nor are its advantages by any means confined to the natives. There are few Europeans who, during rough or stormy weather, are not glad to avail themselves of its services in place of the comfortless, dangerous, and rickety-looking dengee.—But all this while we have not left Baboo's Ghât.

Having, then, hired either a small bhouliya, or punsôee, which is to convey us to Sooksagur, for which conveyance I am to pay four roopees, or eight shillings, and deposited therein a travelling trunk, and divers small matters, not forgetting some trifling "creature comforts" for the trip, you must suppose us, with certain customary pious ejaculations by the boatmen, quitting the ghât at eight in the morning, and after clearing the shipping, and reaching the stream, proceeding at as quick a pace as the most ignorant and skilless, though perhaps the most patient and enduring of rowers in the whole world, will permit us! Mohummudans in religion, they are not more bigoted in faith than in their commonest practices, and hence, obstinately adhering to that method of sitting in which they have the *least power*, and to that manner of pulling in which the oars, by being confined in their action to within twenty degrees of the boat's side, have the *least effect*, we find ourselves progressing, even with a five-knot tide in our favour, at the poor rate of probably seven and a half. In vain we talk—in vain we taunt, and point to the market or travelling boat, pulled by the more sensible or more teachable Hindoos, who, laughing as they pass, throwing themselves forward, and stretching to their oars, quickly leave us behind.



THE DENGEE PULLER.

After quitting the European part of the city and the shipping, together with a great part of the congregated fleet of native store-boats from the provinces, that crowd the bank near the northern division of the city, the first object likely to attract attention is a certain bare and dismal-looking quadrangle, open at the river side, upon the high walls of which—overlooking

\* 1858. In addition to this boat we have now a very fine ferry steamer, in connection with the train belonging to the railway company.



the ground immediately contiguous, where a certain native hide-merchant and contractor with the conservancy commissioners, carries on his delicate operations in connection with the defunct quadrupeds of Calcutta—are perched some fifty or more hungry and expectant vultures; whilst amongst them, or beneath, stalking amidst bones and rubbish, and anon scared from their object by a pack of equally hungry and disgusting-looking pariah dogs, disputants for the prize, are seen a score or so of the adjutant, or gigantic crane.



BURNING THE DEAD AT NEW CREMATION GHAT, CALCUTTA.

This building\* is known as the "Burning Ghât,"—a spot enclosed and appropriated by the Hindoos for the purpose of burning their dead. When I say "the Hindoos," I mean all *who can afford it*,—which, unfortunately, not above one half of the community are enabled to do. Knowing, as you already do, that, with a very small exception (certain low classes and persons who die ascetics), Hindoos do not *bury* their dead, you will be curious to know how the poorer classes dispose of *theirs*.—They are left upon the bank of the river—whither, indeed, they were most probably taken to die—until carried away by that river's sacred tide:—that river from which Calcutta is in a great measure supplied with drinking water! It is not my purpose, therefore, particularly to direct your attention to all which may be seen upon "Gunga's breast," lest I cater more to the curious than the agreeable.

Some years back a very sensible proposition was published in one of the Calcutta papers, recommending the establishment of a subscription fund, in

\* 1858. Since the above was written the old "dismal quadrangle" has disappeared, and a new and improved building has taken its place, and therefore forms the above illustration. The hide merchant, likewise, has shifted his ground further north, and so the present cremation ghât is being deserted also by vultures and cranes, and promises soon to be left in quiet and decency.



order to put it in the power of the poor, as well as the rich Hindoos, to dispose of their dead after that manner which, with very trifling exceptions, is not less acceptable to Hindoo prejudices and desires, than advantageous in a sanitary point of view; but unfortunately, although it was shown that the expense could be brought within two rupees for each cremation, nothing came of it. Instead of there being a cremation fund, therefore, the police have to keep certain boats and men belonging to them, called domes, whose office it is to remove by sinking, all offensive objects found floating in the river,—which they do possibly after the spectacle has passed through the whole fleet, and found at length, most probably, a resting-place against the chain of some ship, or the paddle of a steamer, more luckless than the rest.—So the eye is relieved, at last, at the expense of the stomach!—for who can doubt that the evil thus cherished and confined to one spot must become a loathsome spring of impurity to the water about it? If the government would abolish the boat establishment, and transfer whatever amount it costs to the proposed cremation fund, it might aid in no insignificant degree as a monthly contribution towards the scheme.\*

Let me, however, quit the melancholy spot, the air of which, when the wind is from the shore, has no more charm for *one* sense than the appearance of the scene to another.

Proceeding onwards, a more wholesome air and prospect greet the senses. About four miles from our starting place, and just above Chitpore, the northern skirt of the city, and on the same side, is the fast increasing suburban retreat of Cossipore, at one time the locality only of a government gun foundry, and Messrs. Hawarth, Hardman, and Co.'s flour mills and biscuit manufactory, but now of the residence of some of our quiet-loving aristocracy

\* 1858.—Some time after the above was written the subject was brought under the official notice of government, but, unfortunately, with no more fruits than from the newspaper correspondence. Since then the fires of Delhi, Meerut, Cawnpore,—and where not?—intended to wrap the European population of India in the flames of one stupendous pyre, have put lesser schemes in temporary darkness.

Albeit, the burning of the dead is strictly enjoined by the Shasters, and is one of the first ceremonies performed by the Hindoos for the help of the dead in a future state; there are certain persons and sects, as already stated, who are exceptions to the rule. These are—1. Stillborn children, or infants under two years of age; 2. Persons afflicted with leprosy, or other specified diseases; 3. Suicides; 4. Persons who, under certain circumstances, are killed by violence—the bite of snakes, &c.; 5. Persons guilty of certain civil or religious crimes; 6. Persons who die followers of a certain sect of mendicants, Voistnuances; 7. Persons who die ascetics, or Purnumbungobees; 8. Jogrees, a low caste of Hindoo weavers.—The bodies of infants, of the mendicants and the jogrees are buried. The bodies of those persons referred to under classes 2, 3, 4, and 5 are, according to the Shasters, to be thrown into a forest or river, "like logs of wood," without any sort of funeral ceremony. The bodies of ascetics mentioned under class 7 are required to be put into a stone or wooden chest, or tied to two earthen jars, filled with earth, and sunk in the midst of the river. Beyond these cases, no other necessity exists for committing the dead to the water than that of *poverty*—inability to purchase the wood, oil, and other requirements for the ceremony of burning, which inability compels the relations to be content with applying a little fire to the mouth of the deceased, and then committing the body to the river.

Much painstaking inquiry and argument were brought together to show the difficulty of reconciling the matter to all parties and prejudices, but with something of that impatience which disgust at the con-

or well-to-do citizens, who have no difficulty in driving into town to duty or business in the morning.

About three miles above Cossipore, on the opposite side of the river, may be seen a very pretty suspension-bridge, crossing Bali-Khâl (or Creek), near to which is a school, established in the year 1846, chiefly, I believe, through the liberal instrumentality of two wealthy native gentlemen, Baboos Joykissen Mookerjee, and Rajkissen Mookerjee, of Ootapârah. About two hundred pupils, all Hindoos, are here instructed in the usual branches of a plain English education, and in a knowledge of their own—the Bengalee—language. It is a *paying* school. About forty of the lads of the higher class pay a monthly fee of two roopees, and the remainder one roopee each. Towards the maintenance of this school, government grant a yearly sum of 1200 Rs., equal to the baboo's assignment, and the remainder of the expenses of the establishment are met by the schooling fees, which amount to above a moiety of the whole income, the average being about 2880 Rs.



AGÂPÂRAH

Returning to the view of the city, or eastern side of the river, and about eight miles higher up, an object of yet more interest meets the eye—a plain, but pleasing-looking little church, in the semi-Gothic style, and, adjoining it, a very comfortable-looking dwelling-house, and mission-school, for the instruction of native or other Christian girls. This is Agâpârah, long the

tinuance of barbarous and revolting practices creates, one is almost led to exclaim—less in the words than in the spirit of Corporal Trim—"One home-thrust of the bayonet were worth it all!"

But, without doing violence to any prejudice, the thing is practicable enough in all the simplicity of the original proposition. The exceptions to the rule of burning the dead must be so insignificant in



scene of the labours of a very excellent and exemplary lady, Mrs. Wilson, who, indeed, originally, and by her own exertions, founded the mission, and raised subscriptions for the erection of the church, which cost 25,000 roopees. The school was opened in 1843; Christian teachers were substituted for heathen, and a Christian convert became head master. Yet the scholars increased in numbers, though there were three or four other schools for tuition in English, where secular instruction alone was given. By the year 1845 these had all closed.



SHIVAN TEMPLES, FOR WORSHIP OF SHIVA.

Near to Agápārāh is a place called Dakinsháhar, in former days said to have been a hunting place of the Nawábs of Chitpore, and abounding with

number, as to affect the main question in hardly a greater degree than the case of accidental drowning would affect it. We are told, on the best authority, that in the year 1854 the number of human bodies thrown into the river at one particular ghát at the north end of Calcutta amounted to *three thousand nine hundred and eighty-two*!—and this number there are reasons for knowing is under the average.

The government, it appears, pay 97 Rs. per month for boats employed on the duty already referred to. This would yield 1164 Rs. yearly. If this sum were transferred to the proposed Cremation Fund, it would meet one-fourth of the probable expense of 3933 cremations. If the government were unwilling to contribute more largely, a small tax on the wealthy when burning *their* dead would aid the fund. Public spirit and good taste would effect the remainder; and imposition might be prevented by some simple process of attested declaration of poverty, which could best be framed by the natives themselves.

It is certainly to be hoped that the day is not far distant when this most revolting and sickening custom, with all its offensive consequences, will be numbered with the diabolically cruel Suttee and the almost equally cruel doom of perpetual widowhood, which the courage of a Lord Bentinck and the perseverance of a Rothimerens have swept from the land. It may with safety be asserted that there are no educated or intelligent natives who do not already look upon the fiery immolation of the poor Hindoo widow with much of that astonishment and horror with which Englishmen now recal the one time burning of witches; and in like way will the Hindoo yet learn to regard with surprise and derision the past follies

tigers. In the immediate neighbourhood is a densely populated village, and an innumerable host of Brahmuns.

Several objects of a picturesque character now present themselves: very handsome Hindoo pagodas, flanked on either side of the porch by somewhat formal rows of smaller temples, amidst or relieved by rich, deep foliage of the tamarind or the peepul tree; and rustic ghâts, on high, broken banks, overshadowed by clusters of the graceful and lofty bamboo, and numerous other trees of an Indian jungle which margin the river's bank. Little else is now to be seen, indeed, on either bank, until at the distance (as the river flows) of about sixteen miles, you come in sight of Government House, and the delightful park of the military cantonment of Barrackpore. You know I



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, BARRACKPORE.

have good cause to regard this place with feelings of peculiar attachment. The remembrance of my lamented and amiable-hearted friend, General C—, emphatically styled "the good general," who in the year 1844, was commandant of the station, and, at the same time, I am safe in saying, commanded also the affections of all who had the happiness of knowing him, is associated with so many agreeable recollections, that the natural merits of the place have acquired tenfold value in my feelings; and in proportion to those feelings, you may suppose, are those of melancholy regret with which I now pass the well-remembered ghât and spacious dwelling, where erst I met the warm and gratifying welcome.

Government house of Barrackpore may be termed the country residence of the Governor-general, who, either by carriage, or in his beautiful pinnace

of those prejudices which could add misery to misfortune, and vice to both, by compulsory widow-hood; and in no less degree will they view with disgust, equally with their European friends, the barbarous, indecent, and loathsome practice of exposing their dead, "like logs of wood" and dead dogs, upon the surface of that stream which they reverence, and those waters of which they drink!



or barge, towed by a steamer, generally proceeds thither on Friday, and returns to Calcutta on the Tuesday morning. The house, though plain, is large and substantial-looking, and situated at the head of the small but beautiful park that, for probably a mile, skirts the bank of the river.

The park, which embraces a considerable extent of land, with here and there gently undulating ground (a feature in the landscape which from its rarity in the plains of Bengal, adds no small grace thereto in our eyes) is umbrageous with fine forest trees, and enriched by the most rare and beautiful of cultivated garden plants. A portion of the park (all of which is under charge of a European superintending gardener, who has a body of *málees* or native gardeners under him) is exclusively devoted to experimental botany, and the whole grounds, which are intersected by gracefully meandering paths, both for walking and driving, are not only very tastefully laid out, but kept in the neatest order and cleanliness.



GENERAL COOCH'S HOUSE, BARRACKPORE.

Besides its trees, flowers, and delightful walks (for here at early day with something of the charms of solitude around, you can really *enjoy* a walk), the park possesses other objects of attraction.

Near to the eastern entrance, on one side of the main path which encircles the grounds, is a menagerie, containing the usual zoological and ornithological subjects—such as tigers, leopards, bears, kangaroos, and monkeys, and some very beautiful birds of the pheasant tribe. On the opposite side of the path is a circular enclosure, and bamboo and thatch building for a giraffe, where also may be seen a pair of very fine ostriches and a gigantic tortoise.

Continuing the course of the same path to the lower or south end of the

park, and an enclosure of a more substantial character, strengthened and spiked on the inner side by strong bamboos, will be observed. Here, either reclining their ponderous bodies in the morning sun, or laving their massive hides in the tank which occupies the greater part of the enclosure, are a pair of full-sized Rhinoceroses.

During my stay at Barrackpore it was related that some time previously one of these creatures—the male—had killed an unfortunate sipáhee (native soldier), who, with more animal courage than human reason or prudence, had, upon some occasion of the brute's having by accident broken loose, madly ventured to oppose him. Three sipáhees, walking through the park, suddenly observed the animal, as I have said, at large, roaming the ground.—"Arree bhye!" (Oh, brother!) exclaimed one of the elder and more prudent.—"See! here's the Lord Sahib's animal coming.—Run!"—"Run!" (exclaimed the poor young fellow, who paid so sadly for his temerity, and regarding only the imaginary discredit of running away,)—"Never! If he strikes me, I'll strike him!"—He stood still; and in a few minutes his mangled corpse, as you may suppose, was being dragged about the park by the infuriated rhinoceros.\*



RHINOCEROS ENCLOSURE.

Not many yards beyond the rhinoceros enclosure, occupying a corner of the park, amidst a pretty forest of bamboos, is a very picturesque little

\* 1858.—No unapt illustration of one feature in sipáhee character developed in the present rebellion.—the fool's sacrifice—the sacrifice of present comfort—future prospects, and of life itself, for want of

building of Gothic architecture. This is known as Lord Auckland's school, it having been built and established by that nobleman, when Governor-general, for the education of Bengalee lads, about one hundred and twenty of whom, all Hindoos, are instructed in English, and in their own language, and contribute a small monthly fee, according to the means, I believe, of their parents, of one roopee, or less, towards the support of the institution. The remainder of the expense is met by a grant from what is called the Durbar Fund.



SERAMPORE.

Pursuing the path round to its termination, leads to the evening drive, cooled on the one side by the river, towards which the bank gently slopes, shaded on the other by umbrageous trees, and enlivened by all the gaiety and gallantry of the cantonment, listening to the delightful strains of the military band, which, upon two evenings of the week, is generally found adding its irresistible attractions to the place.

Precisely opposite to Barrackpore is the one time Danish settlement of Serampore. It is a very pretty, neat, and clean little town, and being built on high ground, and having the further advantage of facing a broad and long reach of the river, bears great repute for salubrity,—more than contesting the palm, it is said, on that score, with its opposite neighbour of Barrackpore.

Serampore was built by the Danes in 1755,—taken by British troops in 1808,—restored after the peace in 1815, and retained by the Danish

ordinary intelligence in things wherewith he should have been more conversant than the rest of his countrymen. The three sipahs may typify the late Bengal army; the elder and more prudent those men of the 31st, 13th, and 48th regiments, who covered themselves with honour at Sangor and Lucknow; and the infuriated rhinoceros the infuriated British army, against whose adamantine sides the foolish sipah ran his brainless head, and perished in dishonour.



government until the year 1845, when it was made over, on purchase, to the English, for the sum of twelve laks of roopees, or £120,000. With its cession to the English, ceased the benefit of its refuge to the English debtor!—refuge, that is, only from any *English* process, because recourse to the Danish court was of course open to claimants—a recourse, however, which few, I believe, were at the pains of seeking.

Serampore claims an imperishable interest from its connection with the first missionary operations in Bengal—the celebrated missionary fathers, Doctors Carey and Marshman, and Mr. Ward, all men who have shone in the literature of India, having there (unitedly) first settled and laboured.\* The College, which is on the bank of the river, and for which the Danish government made a grant of the land, was built in the year 1818, from, it is said, the private resources of the Serampore missionaries. The present object of this college is not only to give a good general education to natives in the neighbourhood, but to train up a body of native teachers and missionaries connected with the Baptist Missionary Society. At this time about half a dozen youths, principally East Indian, are receiving an education for this latter purpose.

Next to the college, both in locality and interest, are the paper manufacturing steam mills—not only the first paper mills, but the first steam engine ever set up in India, and are, I believe, the only works of the kind the country yet boasts. They owed their existence to Dr. Marshman, and were intended to manufacture paper for the objects of the mission. They have been continued in operation under his son, Mr. John Marshman, the able editor of one of the most talented and influential of our local newspapers, the *Friend of India*, published at Serampore. Thus, it has been remarked, one of our most popular Calcutta papers (for so it may be termed) is printed and published just sixteen miles from the locality of its principal circulation.

About three miles above Barrackpore, and on the same side, is a very pretty-looking villa, shaded by lofty trees, and embellished by tasteful garden ground, where also many pleasant days, spent under its roof, have added one other to the sunny spots of my limited Indian wanderings. This is Ishapore, the residence of Major W. Anderson, C.B., in charge of the Hon. Company's gunpowder works, which are seen a little in the rear of the dwelling.†

\* Here "the first missionary press was established; the first version of the Scriptures in the languages of this presidency, and the first tract in the language of Bengal, was printed, and the first vernacular school opened, the first converted Hindoo baptized—and the first steam engine ever seen in India, set up, in order to manufacture paper for the printing of the sacred Scriptures."—*Notes on the Right Bank of the Hooghly*. *Calcutta Review*, No. VIII., vol. iv.

† "Formerly under the superintendence of John Parquhar, who contrived to amass the colossal fortune, as it was said, of eighty laks of Roopees. It is but an act of justice to his memory to state that the whole of this sum was not accumulated from the perquisites, fair or unfair, of his official post; a considerable portion of it was the result of the unrivalled parsimony of this prince of Indian misers, who contracted with the solitary servant of his house to supply his table for two annas [3d.] a day! On his return to England he is said to have offered to endow one of the Scottish universities with £100,000 to establish a



A little below Ishapore House is the Ferry, well-known to most persons coming from the city as Pulta Ghât, the terminus, generally speaking, of carriage or buggy journeyings from Calcutta, as travellers here cross the river in order to get into the great public north-west dâk roads. The opposite shore of the ferry is marked by two tombs, one of which is said to have been erected to the memory of an Englishman who was murdered. Here, I believe, will be found the first of the dâk bungalows, erected for the convenience of travellers, and to which I have already referred.

Continuing our journey, we pass a very unattractive looking native town, called Bhuddeshur. It is, however, an important and extensive mart for grain, and appears to be both a busy and populous place. About twelve miles further, on the same, or western, side of the river, we next gain sight of the French settlement of Chandernagore, where the tricolour of France waves over the tower of the government warehouses seen upon the river's bank.



CHANDERNAGORE.

Chandernagore possesses very considerable historical interest, having, we are told, been an extensive and advanced town when Calcutta was little better than a collection of mud huts. Nearly a hundred years ago it was the scene of a fierce though brief struggle between the English and the French, when

Professorship of Atheism, but the offer was of course rejected."—*Notes on the Right Bank of the Hooghly. Calcutta Review*, No. VI., vol. iii.

1858.—The works are now in charge of Colonel Vincent Eyre, C.B., whose talents as an author and a soldier are before the world in his "Narrative of the Cawbool Disasters," and his recent energetic and valuable services in the field against the mutineers.

Admiral Watson, with three men-of-war, (for which there would appear to have been, what there now, I believe, is not, sufficient depth of channel to admit the passage of such large vessels,) cannonaded and captured the place. It was restored to our friends the French in the year 1815.

Proceeding onwards, we next, at the distance of three miles, and on the same side, reach the Dutch settlement of Chinsurah, which, if we have had the good fortune to keep the tide with us for a sufficient length of time, we probably reach by five in the evening. Here, visiting our good friends, the G——'s, I am tempted by their hospitality to put up for the night, or, if not hurried, for a longer period.



CHINSURAH.

Like Serampore, Chinsurah is now, and since the year 1826 has been, an English possession, and was selected alike for its salubrity and convenient locality as a military station and depôt. Besides the cantonments, which are extensive and capacious, an English Church, and a Baptist Chapel, which are here found, Chinsurah is distinguished for its handsome college, commonly called the Hooghly College, where, at an annual cost of about 62,000 Rs., and under a principal, one professor, and fourteen masters (six English, and eight natives), for the different departments of study, above five hundred native lads are instructed in all the usual branches of English useful knowledge, and in the Persian and Arabic literature. Strange to say, a class opened for instruction in the Bengalee language proved unsuccessful, and, consequent on want of attendance, was abandoned as useless. Of the scholars, full four hundred are Hindoos, and (with the exception of two or three Christians), the remainder are Moosulmâns.

The college, which is seen on the bank of the river, was founded in the year 1836, and supported principally from funds bequeathed for pious purposes by a Mohummudun gentleman, by whose name, therefore, it is properly called, being known as "the College of Mohummud Mohsin," of whose property our rulers are now trustees. Any excess of expenditure over the fixed income is met by government, and the scholars of the English department pay a small fee. The system of fee payment has been gradually introduced into all the government colleges, and, in proof of the value set upon education by the people, with ultimate success. Independently of numerous elementary schools, the government maintain eight similar colleges in various parts of the country, at an annual cost of about 453,589 Rs.—fair evidence I think that the cause of education in India has no niggardly supporters in the East India Company.\* I am not aware for what number of scholars the colleges provide instruction. The establishments containing the greater number of students in India are no doubt the missionary institutions,—in particular those of the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland; of the Free Church of Scotland (generally known as "Dr. Duff's"); and of the London Missionary Society at Bhowanipore, in which there are seldom less, on the average, than a thousand students—sometimes many more.†



MOHUMMUDUN COLLEGE.

Resuming our boat journey with the morning's tide, the eye is attracted, about two miles above Chinsurah, by a pair of lofty Moorish spires, or

\* 1858.—The Madrasah, or Mohummudun College of Calcutta, had amongst its branches of study a *military class*. It will not create surprise that since the present outbreak this class has been abolished.

† From an interesting pamphlet, "Statistics of Missions in India and Ceylon," compiled by the Rev. J. Mullens, of the Bhowanipore Mission, it appears that the missionaries maintain no less than 1347



minarets, and visions of the Bosphorus—the Alhambra, or the mosques of Cairo, float before the imagination. These—not the visions, but the realities—are the towers of the Imâmbârah, or Mohummudun College, built and richly endowed by the wealthy native gentleman I have already named Mohummud Mohsin.

This college is situated in the native town of Hooghly, which two centuries back appears to have been (in the days of their Indian prosperity) a Portuguese settlement of considerable importance. In 1631 it was wrested from them, after sustaining a siege of three months, by the Moguls, under whom it became the royal port of western Bengal. After the recapture of Calcutta it was finally taken by Clive, and, although, of course, all its greatness has



BANDEL.

long departed, it is still a gathering place for large numbers of "the faithful."\*

The Portuguese little settlement of Bandel, a mile or so above Hooghly,

vernacular day schools, containing 47,504 boys; together with 93 boarding schools, containing 2414 Christian boys. They also superintend 126 superior English day schools, and instruct therein 14,562 boys and young men. Female education (in my mind the only hope for India) in their hands embraces 347 day schools for girls, containing 11,519 scholars; but greater hopes are entertained from its 102 girls' boarding schools, containing 2770 Christian girls.

\* "It was at Hooghly that the first press ever established at this presidency was set up; and there, in 1778, the first book was printed in Bengal,—the Bengali Grammar of Halhed, from Bengali types,—the punches of which were cut with his own hands by Mr.—afterwards Sir Charles—Wilkins. Such an event, the harbinger of civilisation and improvement, is of itself enough to immortalise any place, even though all its political and commercial greatness should be entirely forgotten."—*Notes on the Right Bank of the Hooghly. Calcutta Review.*

is the last spot of human habitation in the shape of town or settlement which is met with in our progress to Sookságar. Here is to be seen an ancient convent and church, bearing upon its low steeple, or belfry, in antiquated character the date, 1599. This must therefore be the oldest Christian church on this side of India.

And now, having fairly quitted the busier haunts of man, we may turn our attention to other objects of curiosity on the river, of which the fleet of native boats, spread over its broad surface, furnish the most prominent. First we have the bulky *Oolák*, or baggage boat of Bengal, sometimes as gigantic in size as the *Putélee*, and used for much the same purposes. This last-named vessel is a clinker-built boat—that is, having the planks overlapping each other, like those in a London wherry; whereas in the round, smooth-sided *Oolák* and most country boats, they are laid edge to edge, and fastened with iron clamps, having the appearance of being stitched.



THE OOLÁK.

Next we may notice the cumbrous *putélee* (already spoken of), at the close of its wearisome journey of three months from Furrackabad, it may be, laden with a variety of country produce, such as rice—wheat—grain—silk and cotton, and manned by ten or twelve boatmen,—each man—when there is no wind to bring the sail into use—standing up on the bamboo platform or roof, and labouring at an enormous bamboo oar, full eighteen feet in length, with a broad round blade at its extremity, like a baker's peel, with which it is impossible for more than one stroke to be made in about two minutes! It really distresses you to see the amount of labour thrown away upon that one dip of the oar.

Indian boats, as I have already mentioned, are nearly all intended for sailing as well as rowing. Occasionally their sails are made of decent country canvas, but more frequently of a very coarse and common description of fabric commonly called *gunny*,—the material employed for the bags in which the sugar, rice, and other Indian produce is packed for exportation to Europe. Such material you may chance to have seen, and if so you will conclude that durability is not amongst its virtues. Economy of time and labour, also,

not being amongst the acquired "practical knowledge" of natives of the boatmen class, they sacrifice both the one and the other, to save that trifling expenditure in cash which would repay them tenfold in kind; and hence their gunny or other sail may be seen worn to such "a thing of shreds and patches" as frequently to excite a roar of laughter at its truly ludicrous appearance.

The only exceptions to up country boats of any size carrying sails that I am aware of, are those which bring our periodic supplies of hay and straw, which like floating ricks, may be seen gently gliding down with the tide,—little more than guided in their course by the single pair of oars slowly moving at their sides.



HAY AND STRAW BOATS.

Of all Indian craft, however, that skim the Hooghly, commend me, for their really graceful figure, to the *Hilsa fishing-boats*. These singularly formed boats, that from the great length of their tapering extremities, appear to sit upon little more than a third of their whole length, carry perhaps five men, and at the hilsa season are provided with a net of about 6 feet in breadth, and probably 300 feet in length. The long lower edge of this is loaded with small weights, and the upper is supported by bamboo floats, so that on being "paid out," as sailors say, from the boat, it forms a wall in the water, against which the swift swimming hilsa darting, becomes entangled by his fins, and incapable of escape. Sometimes these enormous nets are seen stretching nearly half way across the river, and are kept in position by the floats, to which the net is attached at a sufficient depth below the surface to prevent its being injured by boats or steamers passing over it. The whole is then allowed to float down the river with the tide, any attempt to oppose which by a fixture would of course be fatal to the net. Some of the smaller,



gentler streams of Bengal may be seen staked across from side to side for similar fishing purposes.

When at other seasons these boats are engaged in ordinary fishing, a net of another kind, and of more moderate dimensions, is used. This is stretched between two long tapering bamboos, which are united by crossing each other near the thick or lower end, and made fast to a short horizontal bamboo that rests upon two small uprights, or crutches, on which it turns as upon hinges. To lower the net it is only necessary to let go the inner end of the bamboos, when the weight of the upper is of course sufficient to lower the whole into the water. To raise it again requires probably the leverage and weight of three or four men applied to the inner ends of the bamboos.



FISHING NET AND HILSA FISHING BOATS.

Another and very ingenious method is with a circular net, around the outer edge of which are fastened small leaden weights. A line is attached to its centre, and another is loosely rove around the margin. The net is gathered together in the hands, raised, and skillfully whirled around the head. In an instant, as the margin is allowed to escape, it is seen gracefully to expand like a parachute—pirouette in the air—and then to descend flat upon the water, covering a space of probably eighteen or twenty feet. The centre is kept up by the line attached to it, but the leaden weights instantly descending, surround with the net the luckless fish as in a tent. Those that chance to dart downwards before the mouth is closed may escape: the rest are most probably in the market ere the day is an hour older.

The hilsa, I may mention, is a very rich and delicate fish, in great estimation amongst Europeans, but so excessively bony as to render the pleasure of eating it hardly a recompense for the risk of choking! The roe of the hilsa, however, is a delicacy indeed, that carries with it no risk of danger.

There is a third and rather singular method of fishing I have seen practised on one of the small rivers in this neighbourhood. A large shrub, or small tree, is carried in a boat to the centre of the stream, and there deposited. This is staked about at the distance of a few yards by a circle of bamboos; which done, the men pull round it—at first at a considerable distance, beating a small drum, or rattling together, with equally alarming discord, pieces of wood or bamboo. The object of this is to frighten the fish, and drive them towards and beneath the treacherous shelter of the sunken tree. Lessening the circle of their course, the men gradually close in towards the stakes, which they now surround by a long net—drop the lower edge of it to the bottom, and thus encircle the luckless fish as in a pen. A couple of men then dive, and drawing the lower margin of the net together, secure their unresisting prize.

The lesser fry of the river, such as prawns, shrimps, and a variety of small fish, the *potee*, the *morilla*, and the *undudree*, a species of mullet, are more commonly sought for by the poor villagers living near the banks, who may be seen,—women as well as men—standing, or rather walking, up to their hips in the water, and pushing before them a shovel-shaped hand-net,



HAND AND TURING NET.

from which, at intervals of two or three minutes, when it is raised, they gather a handful, it may be, of some diminutive fish—the hard-earned reward of their patience.

But our water journey for the last two hours has been wearisome. The flood tide at the distance we have now gained is weak, and at the present season, of short duration; whilst a north-east wind has prevented our profiting by the use of a sail. In vain do the men pull (particularly after *their* fashion), albeit urged by the promise of *bucksheesh*, and equally in vain have I sunned myself for the last two or three miles in pull-

ing the spare oar; we now make no progress, and the men must *goon*—that is by aid of a long line made fast to the head of the mast, track or tow the boat from the shore. The labour is excessive, the banks alternately high and low, and broken, are intersected every few hundred feet by breaks and inlets of the river, that have to be forded middle-deep; or if broad and deep, the men must either swim the brief distance, or come on board again, pull past it, and again land. Every now and then fleets of large boats, that need not attempt to stem the strong ebb-tide, are anchored to the shore, and our gooning line has to be cleared from their tall-mast heads, in which operation we are at the mercy of their boatmen sending a man up to cast it off; or it may be, should they be disobliging, or the fleet numerous, that my own men have again to join their boat, and pull to a clear part of the bank. I have been a whole hour pulling round a fleet of such boats at a point of the river where the tide ran with more than ordinary force, and a strong wind also was against us!

With such interruptions you may suppose that our progress is slow indeed; but at length cultivated banks and the operations of the plough present themselves, and Sookságur House and factory, on the left bank of the river, gratify the sight and terminate our water journey at probably four in the afternoon.

As it is too late in the day to proceed further, I here avail myself of the hospitality of the place and remain until the morning. Though there may



be no host to bid me welcome, there are servants on the spot, who, in constant attendance to meet the advent of their master from head-quarters, or



SOOKSÅGUR HOUSE.

his assistants or friends from elsewhere, are quickly summoned and in readiness to render all needful little attentions. How there should be a furnished house and no host, may appear a mystery; but you shall know more about that when we come to talk about Factories and out-factories. For the present it will be sufficient if I state that Sooksågur may be termed an out-factory, where it is not essential there should be any constant resident beyond the Gomastah, or native superintendent, whose dwelling is somewhere about the factory grounds. This, however, was not the state of things upon the first occasion of my visit there, when, indebted to the hospitable attentions of Mr. and Mrs. H——, I found all the cheerful social and domestic comforts of life added to and enhanced by the sweets of mofussul quiet, pure air, and the rural aspect of the place.

Sooksågur House is a neat and comfortable little dwelling in the midst of very pretty and cultivated garden ground, which is surrounded by lofty trees, and adjoins a small village inhabited principally by fishermen, from amongst whom the inland steamers take their first pilot when proceeding on their upward journey.

But Sooksågur, I must tell you, possesses some historical interest. The original house was built by Warren Hastings, as a country residence for himself and three other civilians, and for the purpose of there having an English farm, where experiments in the growth of coffee and other productions of



that character, could be tried in order to test the capability of the soil. It was, indeed, the first property connected with the soil of Bengal, out of what is called the Twenty-four Pergunnahs, possessed under sanction of government by Europeans. The property afterwards passed into the hands of the celebrated Joseph Baretto, a rich Portuguese merchant of Calcutta, who lived there in great style, and amongst other additions to the establishment, founded a Roman Catholic chapel, and provided the priests for its services—of course exclusively for his own family. But—"to what base purposes" may not all things "come at last!"—Mr. Baretto's successor, Mr. Lauraletta, a Spaniard, celebrated for his hospitality and sporting propensities, converted the chapel into a residence for mahouts (elephant drivers) and fighting-cocks!

The ravages of a changing river, however, have destroyed all traces both of greatness and of degradation; for not only have this the original house, and the beautiful village and grounds adjacent, which then stood about two or three hundred yards from the bank of the river, entirely disappeared, but that river is now fully a mile and a half on the south-east side of where the house formerly stood. Indeed, I learn that within the last ten years the river in this place has changed its channel full two miles south-east of its old position.\*

It is now full time to reach Mulnath, but having I think bestowed as much of the subject upon you as your patience will approve for one letter, I shall reserve its continuation for another.

\*But a few months had elapsed when the spot was again visited—and changed was the scene! A few feet of ruined wall, just crumbling into the river, from which, when last seen, it was situated full fifty yards inland, was all that remained of Sookshgur House, which thus rapidly had followed the fate of its predecessor.

1858.—The river now runs above half a mile further south-east of where the house stood, and threatens to turn the very course of the Hooghly.



SOOKSHGUR RUINS.



MULNATH GARDEN.

## LETTER II.

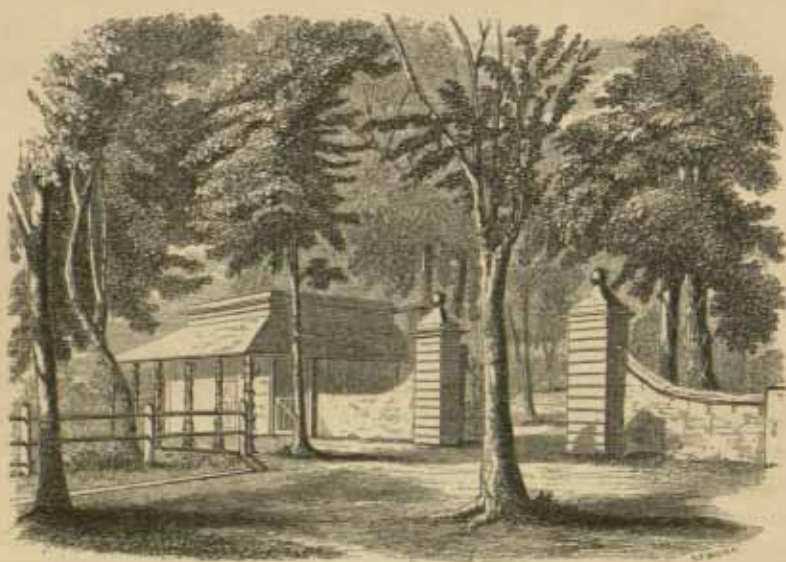
*Mulnath, January 15th.*

Upon the first occasion of my visit to this place, when, as I have already stated, I slept at Sookságur, the continuation of my journey was performed by *dák palkee*. This is a less wearisome mode of travelling than might be supposed—at least to those in health—because there are so many occasions on which—whether favoured by the cold season, the morning, evening, or a shady spot—a traveller can relieve its tedium by walking—as *I* did.

Bearers having been engaged from the village for the early morning, my baggage was sent on by Coolies, under charge of a *Burkendáz*, direct to Mulnath—a distance of twenty-two miles. A *Burkendáz* is generally an up-country man, of courage and trust, employed as a private watchman, and, whether guarding the premises, or going a journey at night, is generally armed either with a spear, or long bamboo quarter-staff, or, if he prefer it, his sword and shield. At a little past four in the morning, refreshed by tea and toast, I started, accompanied by Mr. H—— and his assistant, on horseback, as far as a place called Ameenpore, about five miles on the road, where

my palkee, which had been sent on at a very early hour, was in waiting. From the saddle into the palkee, however, upon so fine a morning, was, to an enfranchised spirit, too like return into captivity to be agreeable. So bidding my friends good-bye, I set out upon foot, my palkee and a train of fifteen men in my rear. I walked about five miles further on the road, breaking the labour of my men, and delighting my eye with the refreshing and really very beautiful, albeit flat scenery of the cultivated plains of Bengal. Never had I before seen the *Date* growing so abundantly and so exclusively. Not a cocoa-nut, nor a Palmyra, to be seen—but dates, albeit of a stunted growth—in all directions.

A hot sun and slight lameness drove me at length to cover, nor was I able to walk again more than a mile or so during the rest of the journey. The men rested but once!—at a village called Bellia, under the shadow of a remarkably fine Banyan-tree, which is protected and encouraged in its growth, it appears, by my host here. With the exception of the great tree of the Honourable Company's Botanic Garden, it is one of the finest and the most picturesque specimens of the banyan I have seen in India.



ENTRANCE LODGE.

As the journey shortened, the pace of the bearers increased; so that by a little past two o'clock I sighted a small green cottage-like dwelling in the distance, and was informed I had reached Mulnath. The little green building proved to be one of the gate lodges at the extremity of the grounds; upon nearing which, and clearing the numerous trees that shrouded the approach,



Mulnath House opened upon my surprised sight, and reminded me of the mansions of old England, which we are accustomed to see represented in old views of some of the country seats of our nobility.

Albeit, little distressed by *my* weight, I was yet glad to relieve the poor bearers; when ascending the broad flight of steps of the portico I was welcomed to a residence, the elegance, completeness of decoration, of furniture and convenience throughout which, appeared to be all in keeping with its imposing exterior. The lower story, floored with the finest grey marble, richly carpetted, and furnished in short with the most chaste and tasteful materials, at once realised all that I had been led to expect of Mulnath mansion.

Time, and its vicissitudes of fortune, have wrought some regretted and unmerited changes in its appearance since then, but the spirit within has known no change. A cultivated and refined taste, indeed, is not dependent upon abundance for its exercise, and may be as much displayed in the cottage of the poor as in the palace of the great; so that though there may be now less of costly magnificence, I find none of the essentials of elegance and comfort lacking. Mulnath, in short, has moulted not one feather of its charms.

Mulnath House and grounds are situated in the district of Nuddea, or Kishnaghur, and on the right bank of the Echamuttee river, one of the smaller tributaries of the Ganges, having its mouth amongst the innumerable streams of the Soonderbunds, and uniting its waters with those of the Matabanga, at a place called Kishengunge. The last-named river, which at its entrance is called the Choornee, near the ruins of an old native stronghold at Hurrodhan, enters the Hooghly at Seebpore, about eight miles above Sookságur.

Although the distance from Calcutta is not above fifty-two miles in a straight line, its aspect and character would lead you to suppose its locality to be in some very distant province. Indeed, in the absence of native servants, there is hardly a feature to interfere with an indulgence of the imagination that the scene is European,—an impression which Mr. F— improved by removing from the immediate grounds most of the very few trees of the palm kind which he found scattered over their surface.

The house itself, of the exterior of which the pencil will afford you the best conception,\* is full one hundred and ten feet in breadth, by probably as much from the front to the rear, and contains eighteen apartments, besides bathing and dressing-rooms; whilst the arches beneath the building, which is thus thoroughly dry and ventilated in its lower story, are so large, that they have been converted into cellars, one of which, having a range of fireplaces, affords more conveniently than the distant kitchen, a constant supply of hot water for domestic purposes.

In front of the house, separated only by the circular and gravelled path-

\* See illustration at the head of Letter I.

way, where the finishing little features of a sundial and garden seats complete its neatness, is a fine park, containing above seventy acres of land, wherein between twenty and thirty beautiful deer are browsing in happy security from the terrors of horn and hound. One little favoured fawn has been made a pet of by my fair hostess, and roams the house and visits its friends and kindred as it lists. Tanks, in which turkeys, geese, and ducks, seek their enjoyment, groups of small trees of the Bábool kind, under which the deer find rest at night, and shelter from the midday sun, and well-kept broad winding paths, shaded by magnificent Tamarind and Magnolia trees, and clusters of the Bamboo, leading from the dwelling to the various lodges or gateways and out-offices, diversify the park.



THE LAKE AND AQUEDUCT.

On the north side of the premises, partly skirted by the park and garden grounds, and supplying nearly all that the imagination could desire to render the landscape of the place complete, is a remarkably fine, broad, clear lake gracefully winding in its course for upwards of a mile and a half in the form of a horse-shoe. The formation of this body of water into a lake illustrates one of the remarkable features in the rivers of Bengal—the changes in their course. This lake was originally a bend in the Echamuttee, the force of its stream during the height of the inundations having in process of time cut for itself a new and shorter channel across the land which separated its nearest curves, and thus, deepening its new bed, finally left the old curve, by accumulation of deposit, to dry up at its two ends, and converted the deserted



body of water into a lake. The natives distinguish a lake so formed from one of usual origin or shape by calling the former a *bower*—whilst the latter is termed a *bheel*. On reference to the little map of Mulnath and its environs (very kindly given me by Major R. Smith, of the Survey Department), which accompanied my first letter, you will observe several lakes of similar form, all of which you may fairly conclude to have had a like origin in deserted sinuosities of the changing, fickle river.

Near to the Factory, the lake may be seen intersected across its whole breadth by a long line of brick pillars, which, during the manufacturing season, support a wooden aqueduct, for the purpose of conveying water to the works from the river, with which the further end, running across the narrow neck of land that separates it from the lake, communicates. Simple as this object may appear, its extreme length and tapering perspective, reflected in the calm blue surface of the lake, at the margin of which the white paddy-birds are seen stretching, dipping, and diving their long thin necks, and all backed by the beautiful verdure of the opposite sloping bank, and an Indian sky, confer upon it those claims to the picturesque of which mere pen and ink delineations, at least, can convey to you but a faint impression.

At either side, where the bed of the lake is at the present season entirely dry, the aqueduct has been permitted to remain, and at this end is connected with a very ingenious structure, the *Chinese Pump*, which, almost embowered amidst overhanging trees, and altogether shut in by the dense foliage of the garden, offers a yet greater share of claim to the pictorial.

Immediately in rear of the dwelling, extending beyond either side, refreshed and beautified upon its northern margin by the water of the quiet lake, is the garden just referred to, occupying about four or five acres of ground, rich in every charm which the finest trees, rare shrubs, and the choicest plants and flowers, disposed with the greatest good taste, and tended with all the care which one "who loves a garden" and "a greenhouse too," can bestow upon it. His efforts have fortunately a good executive in a very intelligent *málee*, or native gardener, whose little dwelling, close to the aviary, near the northern entrance of the garden, clothed in a rich covering of the convolvulus and elephant creepers, the *quisqualis* and the *pancolater*, claims place amongst the picturesque objects of the grounds. The *málee* is one of that smart class of men who, having served in the Hon. Company's Botanic gardens in Calcutta, have acquired a familiar knowledge of the Latin nomenclature of the plants,—a knowledge which he of Mulnath never fails to sport on all occasions of inquiry respecting the plants under his charge.

My kind friend regrets that I did not arrive a month earlier, when certain beautiful creepers, that literally shroud some of the tall trees of the avenue which skirts the east side of the garden, were in full bloom; but beyond this, I can imagine little wanting to complete the full measure of charms belonging to an Indian spring. To the poor around, who are poorly



clothed and poorly housed, it is *winter*; but to the European, surrounded by the bounties of Heaven and all needful comforts, it is "ethereal spring,"—a spring, let me tell you, presenting no mean rivalry even to yours.



THE AVIARY.

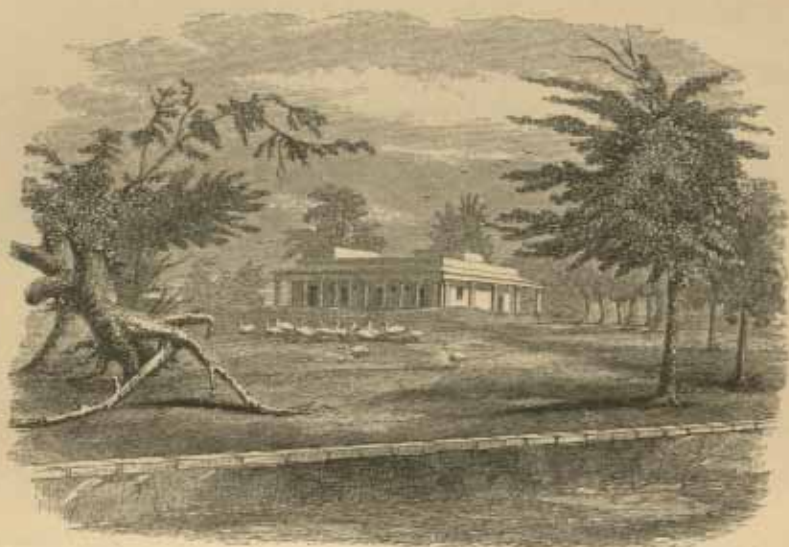
Imagine it early morning. The sun—whose cheering warmth is now wooed by the poor, and rather courted than shunned by all—has just risen, and begun to throw those "lengthened shadows" which, uniting the varied objects of the scene, confer so much of that beauty which artists call "breadth of effect" over the landscape. Two saddled horses are at the door, and I am invited to a ramble about the grounds.

But, first of all,—with the gentle Cowper,—

"pleased  
With sight of animals enjoying life,"

feeling "their happiness augment his own,"—some hundreds of little pensioners on his bounty claim the attention of my companion. A flight of probably two hundred and fifty pigeons, that have their undisturbed and spacious dwelling on the roof of the cook-house, or kitchen, about one hundred yards from the house, are advancing like a cloud, or suddenly dropping from the cornice of the house, where they have been patiently waiting the feast, swarm on the lawn around, and nearly envelope the little man that tends them. One could almost envy the fellow the privilege of so much confidence. Next, the deer, headed by the bolder buck, timidly and cautiously approaching the trough, where one keeps watch while the rest

feed, receive their morning's supply of grain. Then the rabbit-hutch is visited, and the jemadar, or khansaman, receives some fresh instructions for the comfort of the timid inmates; or of the various fowl, rare or domestic, that rove at pleasure the spacious grounds about.



THE KITCHEN, ETC.

Now—after satisfying our curiosity by measurement, that the young bamboo really does grow *six inches* in twenty-four hours—we mount, and accompanied—it may be, on his pony—by the gomashitah, or head superintendent of the factory, who wishes to show master some neighbouring fields, which he thinks merits early attention at the approaching cultivation, we trot out of the park. The morning is lovely. With all the brightness of an Indian day, however the air is as sharp and bracing as you would be likely to desire it. Quitting the road, which for sixteen miles leading to the market town of Chogda, Mr. F—— has rendered a sheltered path to thousands of poor pedestrians by having,



THE BAMBOO.

eight years ago, planted Toon-trees throughout its whole length. We pass through the picturesque village of Pānchpotha at the head of the lake, and out into the open cultivated fields, many of them lovely in their green mantles of the Moisnea and Sursar, or linseed and mustard crops, the pretty little purple flower of the one beautifully harmonising with the rich yellow bloom of the mustard plant, amongst which it is sometimes seen mingling. This, like the poppy amongst the corn, is an accidenta

circumstance, the seed of the one having become mixed with the other at the time of sowing. Both these plants are generally sown in the



THE VILLAGE OF PANCHPOTA.

month of October; and whilst the mustard is cut in December, or during the present month, the regular crop of linseed is not gathered in till about March.



MOOSHA, OR LINSEED.



TOBACCO.



SWA MUSKAN, OR MUSTARD.

The Tobacco plant, also, which is extensively cultivated all around Mulnath, the Huldee, or Turmeric plant, and the chilli, pendant twigs, are now and ready for deed, the gathering of the tobacco has already commenced, of which we have near evidence,



HULDEE.

gathering of the tobacco has already commenced, of which we have near evidence,



for the people of the nearest village, its cultivators, having plucked the leaves have very coolly, for better security sake, spread them to dry inside the park grounds: but, I suppose, they know the heart of the master, and can "safely trust to him."



CHILLIES.

Now, the very horses, snuffing the invigorating atmosphere, are impatient at restraint, and we go off at a delightful canter, threading the mazes of a little



TOBACCO FLOWER.

narrow path, about twenty inches in breadth, that divides the various fields of ripe tobacco, the golden mustard crop, or the more sober-hued Urhur, a species of pulse, extensively used in the diet of the natives; or at once crossing a dozen of other fields, some ploughed up, and some from whence the Jeel, or Sesame plant, an Oil crop, sown in August and reaped in November, has but lately been cut, we meet the gomastah who has gone by some much nearer route. Reining up, a few minutes' conversation settles the question of the field, and at the same time the petitions or grievances (to which there is ever a willing ear) of some poor peasants having also been attended to—either settled on the spot or referred to the office—we canter back in the direction of the north side of the lake, and approaching a collection of huts, suddenly ride up a bank, and through a cluster of bamboos, into a pretty-looking village, where, to my surprise, on the first occasion of my visit, out swarmed from a long hut, or school-room, about one hundred little dark urchins, with pens and palm leaves in hand, and the school-master at the head, to make their sulām to the Sahib, their friend and patron.



THE JEEL.

My host, I find, is one of those "Roger de Coverley" sort of persons in his principles of kindly relationship towards those about him, that believe the bond of servitude to possess a mutual covenant—some little obligation, in short, on the higher party beyond mere payment of wages; who, believing that Providence did not place him in his present position merely to make indigo, and burthened with a conscience, fortunately finds the indulgence of its dictates not a mere duty, but a source of the highest pleasure. The little assembly we have just seen is a school which he has established for

elementary instruction, in the vernacular, of the children of the labourers employed in the factory, and resident in the immediate neighbourhood. The little fellows exhibit considerable aptitude for learning, and, if I may judge by the happy expression of their faces, no less pleasure in its acquirement.



THE STABLES.

We now proceed towards the house, and entering the grounds from the rear, or north-east side of the lake, dismount at the stables, the thatched and rustic exterior of which covers a substantial building of brick and wood, containing a double line of comfortable stalls for sixteen horses, six of which only are at present occupied. These having been duly seen, petted, or in some way cared for, we walk (for probably fifty yards further) along the shaded path that leads by the river side, and enter a large well-raised brick and timber building, with thickly thatched and ventilated roof. This is the male ward of Mulnath Hospital, which my good host projected and built, partly at his own cost, in the year 1842. Having done this, he applied to Government to aid in its support. This the Government agreed to do by supplying medicines gratis, on condition of Mr. F——'s undertaking by guarantee to meet all other expenses, inclusive of half the salary of a native doctor, Government consenting to pay the remaining moiety. To all this Mr. F—— pledged himself, and no further time was lost. The services of a native assistant surgeon, on recommendation from the Medical College of Calcutta, were obtained on a salary of one hundred roopees (afterwards increased to one hundred and fifty) per mensem. The Honourable Company supplied



medicines and surgical instruments, and the hospital opened its doors to the sick poor of a population, on the Mulnath property alone, of full two



HOSPITAL.—MEN'S WARD.

hundred thousand peasantry! When I tell you that up to this time the nearest hospital aid on one side was in Calcutta, fifty-two miles distant south, and on the other at the station of Kishnaghur, thirty-two miles north, you will be able to imagine the blessing thus conferred upon the poor around Mulnath.

The men's ward contains twenty-four beds, nearly all of which are occupied. The disorders most frequent amongst the poor of Bengal generally, to which the peasantry around this place, despite its salubrity, form no exception, are fever, spleen, and dysentery. Exposure, poverty of food, clothing, and housing, may be named as the exciting causes; whilst their imprudent neglect of early symptoms (I may safely say, the cause of half the mortality in cases of cholera), delay in seeking help, in short, until their disorder has gained an alarming head, accounts for the miserable condition in which most of them are found when entering the Hospital. Surgical cases also, of very considerable magnitude too, are frequent; and in this department, the skill of the English-taught doctor more particularly elicits the confidence and wonderment of the uneducated natives.

About twenty yards further on we come to the women's ward of the hospital; at one extremity of which, partitioned off by a screen, the worthy and skilful doctor, Deenonath Dhur, who generally meets us in his morning's



round, has his little laboratory, or compounding table, books, instruments, and other material pertaining to his professional duties.



HOSPITAL.—WOMEN'S WARD.

Dr. Deenonath Dhur, who was a student of the Calcutta Medical College, and served for some time as native assistant surgeon in the Buttee territory, is



DOCTOR DEENONATH DHUR.

a very pleasing specimen of the educated native. He has not become a Christian, but he would, I suspect, not be found very far from it, if not surrounded by those trammels by which all Hindoos are fettered in their social condition. As it is, however, his good sense and enlightened views upon most matters, enable him, without offence to his more orthodox friends, to see the grosser errors and superstitions of his father faith, and to avoid at least its extravagancies in his own practice. This, I believe, may be said to be the midway condition of half the educated natives in Calcutta. Few people, indeed, can imagine the ordeal which a Hindoo convert to Christianity has to undergo. He becomes both an inflictor and an inflicted; and, if of tender heart, must needs feel far more distress at the pain occasioned, it may

be to aged parents, by his, in *their* opinion, outrageous apostacy, than by all the persecution he himself may suffer at the hands of enraged and zealous friends and kindred.

Now, with varied little expressions of comfort and encouragement to the poor patients around, which my companion's familiarity with the *Bengalee* language, (to those surrounded by the peasantry of the land, the most important of the vernaculars), so well enables him to afford,—we turn our steps towards the Factory, and there leaving Mr. F—— to the duties of his office, around which a crowd of officials and others are waiting his presence, I retrace my way to the house, and with my sketch-book stroll out into the fields, where, seated on the grass, the lenient sun permits my remaining, fearless of his beams, though protected only by a white covered cap, until full eleven o'clock in the forenoon. Then returning, I rejoin my host at his office, from whence, after a visit to the Bakery (for you may suppose all domestic wants of this character are provided for at home), and a request to the skilful little baker to indulge us with a hot roll or so by one o'clock, we enter the garden, where, directing our steps to that portion exclusively devoted to kitchen vegetables, an examination is made of the success of its varied European exotics, the potato, the cabbage, the cauliflower, and, in short, nearly all the usual productions of an English kitchen garden, which are thriving excellently;—but,—oh dear me!—what havoc is this? The mischievous deer, forgetful of their usual seclusive and retiring habits, and clearing at a bound railings and palings six or seven feet high, have in the night been here, and destroyed I know not how many thriving and aspiring props of green peas! Well, albeit, the remedies are not past “the griefs are ended;” the fence must be repaired and raised, and some summary punishment inflicted the next time upon the mischievous intruder—if caught.

We now enter the house—bathe, dress, and prepare for—breakfast! Yes, such are Mofussul hours—or, if you prefer it, such the name given to the mid-day, and by far the most acceptable meal (for it is now one o'clock) common in Mofussul, or at least in planter life. The fact is, that an earlier hour would not, as a regularity, suit a planter's habits. He is frequently in the saddle from daylight until ten, eleven, and twelve in the day, and to take more than the customary and delightful cup of tea or coffee, with a trifle of toast or bread and butter, which at five or six in the morning are invariably prepared, would no more be fitting to the stomach before a hard ride of fifteen or twenty miles, than could such a meal be any suitable representative of the substantial repast which is invariably characteristic of an Indian breakfast. In five cases out of ten, however, it is probable that a planter's own breakfast partakes more of the character of a tiffin or dinner. A keen appetite, after hard exercise, induces him to substitute the beverage of Bass or Allsop for that of Pekoe or Souchong, which, however, where there are ladies or guests, is of course, prepared.



Domestic stores or provisions in planter life you may suppose are generally managed much as in farmer life in England. Live-stock is kept on the grounds, which also furnish a large proportion of vegetables; whilst, at stated periods a servant is despatched to the city, which is indented on for such delicacies and requisites as neither the soil nor the country are capable of furnishing. In many cases, where there is either want of management, convenience, or means, which is more particularly likely to be the case in out-factories, where probably bachelor-assistant planters reside, live stock is confined to ducks and fowls, which, with such variations only as their servants' skill can produce in the mode of cooking, form their invariable animal food. I have heard planters jestingly declare that they were ashamed to look a fowl in the face.

Probably the more weighty difficulty lies here; that as no single man could eat a whole sheep—and in a warm climate meat will not keep, during at least eight months out of the twelve, more than a day—it would be a monstrous piece of extravagance to sacrifice a whole animal to obtain one meal. The residue could not even be applied usefully by “giving to the poor,” for neither servant, unless possibly, *one* man, the low caste sweeper, nor needy peasant would touch it. It would literally be thrown to the dogs. To meet this difficulty, therefore, some planters residing either near to a civil station or to each other, form what is called a “meat club.” A sheep or whatever it may be, is killed upon certain days of the week, and the joints are distributed among the subscribers.

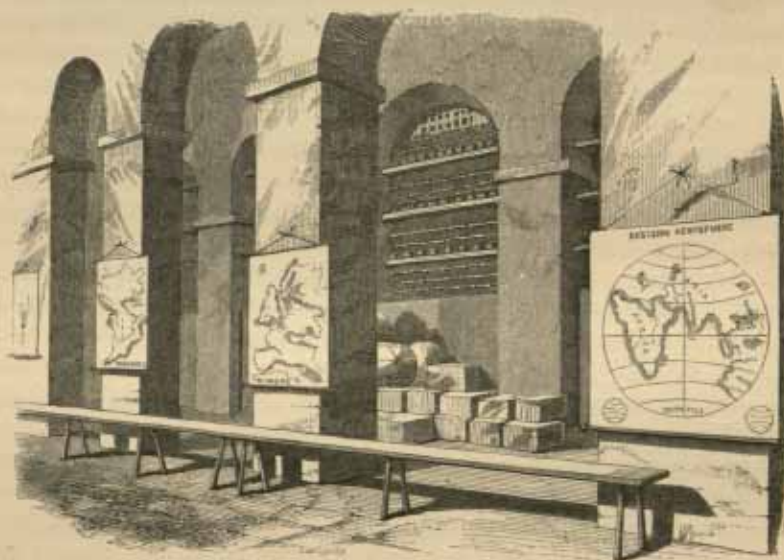
Mulnath, with its spacious grounds, perfect management, and fine flock of carefully tended sheep, is independent of this necessity for its supply of mutton—and consumers are seldom lacking—but the article *beef* offers difficulties of another character, and can only be obtained here, as in all small communities or settlements—inclusive even of Chandernagare, Chinsurah, and others near Calcutta—by recourse to the city, or some adjacent civil station. The slaughter of an ox amidst a Hindoo population, whose good will it is an object with the planter to conciliate, and more particularly when the head servants of the factory are probably all Brahmins, would, to say the least, be offensive to them; and in the event of the Zumeendar being a Koolin Brahmin, the offence would be so capped that, independently of good feeling in the matter, prudence would not warrant or approve it.

As to fish, though lacking the delicacies of the Tupssee muchlee, (or mango fish,) the Bhektee and Hilsa, or (sable fish,) of the Calcutta markets, which, however, are not wanting where there are large tanks wherein to breed them, the lake here furnishes a supply of several kinds of a small character, in particular the Kursoola, a species of mullet, which is very palatable. But the present is the worst season, generally, for this almost invariable accompaniment to an Indian breakfast table. The rivers are all low, some almost dry, and the supplies, therefore, are proportionately scanty, both here and



elsewhere; for, although there are at the present time fewer alligators—(which you must know abound in the river here) the same cause which drives them from their accustomed haunts—scarcity of water—diminishes the stock of fish also.

Breakfast over, the morning papers, which arrive from Calcutta by eleven o'clock of the second day, discussed—for a while (unlike city habits) all generally becomes quiet as night about the factory house. A morning's ride on two or three horses, of probably twenty—possibly thirty miles (far from an uncommon distance,) can hardly be performed without fatigue to the most powerful, and an hour's rest is not less acceptable to recruit from past labours than to prepare for fresh—those of the mind and the pen.



THE SCHOOL ROOM.

Once again joining my host in a walk through the delightful garden, we repair to the factory, where, upon my first visit, a new surprise and gratification met my view. Entering a long room adjoining the office, and forming a spare division of what is called the "drying-room" the use of which you will understand by-and-bye, duly hung around with several large maps and other educational appliances, I found myself in the busy hum of a school room, where upwards of sixty very respectable looking lads, children of the neighbouring natives, of the better classes, were receiving an English education, little inferior in its extent to that imparted at the great institutions of Calcutta. This is another of my excellent friend's quiet means of uniting personal gratification with the good of those around him. For upwards of six years the affairs of the school, dependent almost entirely on Mr. F——'s

support and encouragement, prospered beyond what might have been supposed even probable success. The services of a clever ex-student of the General Assembly's Institution, had been obtained as schoolmaster, on a salary of sixty rupees per month, a residence provided for him on the premises, and the number of pupils at one time amounted to upwards of one hundred boys.

Alas! that the blight should have fallen on so fair and promising a field of fruitfulness. The unhappy disruption of affairs here, I have already referred to, threw everything into dismemberment. The very hospital was threatened with destruction; it survived the shock; but the school, deprived at once of all means of support, ceased to exist, and the benevolent project of its founder seemed for ever to be destroyed. I have been greatly pleased, however, during my present stay, to find that by aid of the like indefatigable spirit that formed it, there is a likelihood of its resuscitation. The return of the master of Mulnath was not, unhappily, accompanied by a return of those means that could restore things to their former condition; but, a beginning can be made, and what will not an influential mind and a good example do! Already some thirty of the scholars have regathered together, and the worthy doctor, our friend Deenonath Dhur, catching the spirit of the place, to his great credit be it spoken, voluntarily devotes two hours every day to the duties of schoolmaster. His reward will be better than gold.

Having spent, probably, half-an-hour in the school room, I now leave my host to the afternoon duties of his office, and whilst he is busily engaged in a task of pretty voluminous English- and Bengalee correspondence against the evening post, for dispatch to agents and assistants, and listening to about an equal quantity directed to Zumeendars (landholders), gomastahs, and other native officials, which his own assistants have prepared, after dictation, for his signature, I may as well take the opportunity of mentioning what particular duties devolve upon the planter at the present time. This may be briefly done; for as they consist of the dull affairs of money and accounts, I shall find little of an entertaining character to dwell upon. I may observe, however, that whatever holidays the Planter can afford himself can only well be taken at the present season. Combining business with pleasure, he visits Calcutta, where probably he manages to arrive in time for a Christmas or New Year's dinner, and meeting with his friends; and where also the produce of his past season's manufacturing having been sent down before him, he endeavours to effect favourable arrangements for its sale. He takes the same opportunity of transacting all necessary business matters, private and official, settling tradesfolks' bills, and arranging accounts with agents and others for the past and coming season. This done, he returns to his factories, and there his time is occupied in settling accounts with the Ryuts for the past year, and making advances for the cultivation of the present.

Beyond this,—as to how a planter may occupy his time, how fill up the leisure permitted him at this, or any other period, (and there is frequently a great deal), I have already had some opportunities of shewing you, and may



have more. Truly, considering the position of a planter, I do not know of any, indeed, upon which a greater amount of responsibility rests, or wherein so vast an amount of good and evil are in the dispensative power of a single individual,—making him, in short, a blessing or a curse to the land, and the multitudes of people by whom he is surrounded. It is not that he can perform miracles. It is not that by magic he can elevate the condition,



THE SCHOOLMASTER'S DWELLING.

or transform in an instant the whole character of the people about him. None better knows than does a planter what favouring showers—what genial suns—what care—what choice of soil—what weeding, and what watchfulness are needed to bring to fruitful maturity one grain of that seed on which his hopes depend. Are the human and uncultured mind and heart more pliant than a grain of indigo? The mission of the European to India was not *to find* a highly principled, educated and enlightened people, but to aid in *making* them so. It is not that by any immediate act of his he can confer judgment, or honesty, or truthfulness, but that by his own strict and consistent example of honourable and generous conduct, and his superior intelligence, he will acquire and exercise that influence over the minds of the thousands around him which, though it may not *beget* principle, at least discourages the abuse of it, and by practical results convinces them that “honesty is the best policy,” and ignorance the mother of want. The supreme government itself exercises not a hundredth part of that influence over the conduct and happiness of the poor of this land that is in the power of an indigo planter. In direct proof of this, indeed, and of how that influence, of which you have seen the direction here, was exercised eighteen



years ago, not only over those immediately connected with a factory, but the inhabitants of a part of a district, I have lately seen gratifying documentary evidence,—evidence alike of the good which a *single individual* can produce, and of the right spirit in the Government which induced an official acknowledgment of it.\* Assuredly, if a man have the heart to do good around him, the field is wide for the indulgence of his wishes and ingenuity. There is no difficulty in discovering the how and the where. But without any help from invention, the actual duties of his position—those arising from his connection as a kind of lord of the manor, with the host of poor around, will be sufficiently obvious, and best suggestive of those of a voluntary character.

Conceive, for example, the influence, for good or for evil, of a person in the position of my host in this place, and of his responsibility, not only to those amongst whom he lives, but to his country for the impression his conduct must create upon so large a body of people. The population attached to the Mulnath concern, which collectively might be termed a district, is estimated at about 200,092 souls! To this, the population of another, the Katgara concern, must be added, increasing the number to little short altogether of two hundred and eighty thousand.†

Now, have the bulk of these poor people, think you, any knowledge of our good Queen Victoria—of the Governor-General—the Honourable Court of Directors—the Supreme Council—the Chief Justice—or hitherto, even the Magistrate of their district? No more than the pitmen of Sunderland have of the Umeer of Caubool, or the Wālee of Kholoom or Balk!—Yes, they may have heard of *the magistrate*, certainly, he who lives at the distance of thirty-five or forty miles, in the midst of a district embracing an area of three thousand square miles, containing upwards of a million of people; and

\* The document referred to, containing an extract from the Commissioner's General Police Report to Government being so strongly illustrative of what has been advanced, tempts quotation. It acknowledges the improved state of a particular part of the Nuldea district, since certain factories belonging to Messrs. Hills and White had been placed in charge of Mr. J. P——, and goes on to state:—

"18.—The late officiating magistrate, Mr. Halkett, communicated to me personally that since this young gentleman had been fixed where he now is, he had by his mildness of manner and integrity of conduct, so much conciliated the regard of the natives about him, that complaints in this court, which previous to his arrival were numerous, had now ceased. In fact, quietness and peace had succeeded to turmoil and trouble.

19.—I have been led to mention the above, because it tends to show how much good or evil may result from the unrestrained settlement in the country of European British subjects, and because it is particularly gratifying to my feelings to bring to the notice of Government one whose good conduct has produced such beneficial effects within the sphere of his influence."

† The Mulnath concern includes the following factories:—

Mulnath.	Jypeoor.	Chandareea.	} Moosulmāns 108,976 Hindoos . . 91,116 200,092 Averaging a little more than five to a house.	} The Katgara concern includes six factories. Hindoos . . . 30,078 Moosulmāns . . 43,761 73,839
Bagalanganah.	Benapool.	Barugoree.		
Pimplebarriah.	Doorgapoor.	Hooghly.		
Bhowanipore.	Gyutta.	Peeragachee.		
Chattapottah.	Dooma.	Mirzapore.		
Boocha Kalee.	Roodapoor.			

if they form any conception of him by his representatives, or delegates, the daroga and his police myrmidons, whose visits they regard and dread as those of banditti, they must flatteringly suppose him to be some monster Sawney Bean, or Robin Hood—a levier of blackmail on the poor and helpless!

Of late, however, I am happy to be assured that some of the magistrates, during the cold season, generally take a tour through the district, in order to familiarize the people with them and gain their confidence. This is well; but, surrounded by their Umlah, or officials, and police followers, it is believed that the poor are at present kept at as great a distance, as though the magistrate had remained in his Cuchary.\* No,—to be known and useful to the poor natives, people must be *amongst* them, as the Missionary and the Planter can be, and are. The only great man with whom the poor people here are familiar is the Sahib of the Neel Kotee†—he who, living in the midst of them, is come-at-able; who sees them, talks to them, whose stirrup-iron amidst their very crops is the only step requiring neither fee nor bribe, form nor favour, nor law process, between them and justice; he who, with kind words and equally kind actions, encourages their confidence and wins their gratitude, and by the equity of his own conduct, and impartiality of his judgment in deciding disputes amongst themselves, cements their attachment and respect, and confirms his authority. Indeed, as touching his mediation in their own affairs—in all matters not very serious, in disputes about land—family property and violence, he may be characterised as judge and magistrate, and, from his position, and opportunities rightly applied, far more so, in truth and effectiveness, than the paid one.

My experience cannot, of course, enable me to assert that this picture is realised *every where*. I can only say it is so *here*, and in one or two other factories I have visited, where the example and authority of those at headquarters exercise their healthful influence. It can, and it *should* be realised everywhere; and where it is not, I would only observe it were a pity that man should prosper, or his fields yield their increase, who so disgraces his country, and dishonours his responsibility as to abuse the trust committed to him.

This little commentary upon the moral duties of my host ended, you must suppose evening to have closed in, when I again stroll to the office. The lighted taper shews the work of sealing to be in hand, and a little bustling bow-legged man, with a long staff and girded loins, is waiting to receive the letter budget; with which, at last provided, he trots off a distance of five miles to the post-office station and village of Bongong, from whence the Eastern post, passing in the night, or early in the morning, conveys it on to Calcutta.

The labours of the day ended, we now return to the house, where a bright coal fire forms no unwelcome addition to the comforts of the evening

\* Court or office (sometimes spelt Kutcherry).

† Neel kotee—Indigo house or factory.



dinner. This—I mean the fire—was at one time a rare feature even in Calcutta life, though of late the introduction of fireplaces into the city dwellings has very properly ceased to be a novelty; but in the Mofussul, where the atmosphere at this season is probably several degrees colder, and the building more exposed to wind and damp, they become indispensable requisites.

Dinner over,—the disposal of evening at Mulnath, as elsewhere, depends on season and circumstances. At those holiday times, principally in the month of October, when friends, seizing the opportunity, fly from desks and offices to the delightful relief of a week's visit to Mofussul friends, Mulnath, you may suppose, has attractions of no ordinary kind, and willing visitors in no ordinary number. In its former state, I have heard of more than twenty guests being entertained and housed under its hospitable roof. At such a time, then, with various minds to please, the billiard-table, amongst other sources of amusement, would be drawn upon; but at other periods the billiard-board,—which like “the rod, the gun, the turf and chase,” that form the usual recreations of most city and Mofussul gentlemen, has no charms for my host—is unthought of; and so therefore, with the quiet resources of social converse or the library, passes our Mofussul evening, and with it all that I can suppose likely to interest you connected with a *cold weather* or spring day at a Factory.

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SKETCH OF LOCKPORT LAKE.

### LETTER III.

*Mulnath, January 20th.*

My present trip to Mulnath having, as I mentioned, been in some measure connected with a sanitary object, it is but proper I should report progress, as I think it would be doing an injustice to Mofussul life not fully to declare all its claims to our regard.

After the usual wearisome boat journey, I arrived at Sooksâgur at ten in the morning, and there found everything had been in readiness for me since daylight;—servants, tea and toast, and a horse in saddle. So hastily partaking of the temperance “stirrup cup,” and strapping a change of linen to my saddle bow, I mounted, and with a splitting headache, which had been my companion since the preceding day, rode off. “A promising beginning—methought—for a ride of twenty-two miles;” but former experience had not left me without hope.

The first stage of about nine miles, to a place called Nulee, with an unabatedly racking head, and through a blazing hot sun, appeared fifty miles at least;—but reaching Nulee, I gathered courage, there observing the

second horse to be my old favourite "Toby,"—a very pleasant animal to ride. Toby was fresh, and breaking from the Syce's hold, almost ere I had mounted, went off at a pace which evidenced the knowledge that he was homeward bound. Now, (whispered hope,) this will break the headache.—As though it had been a fiend, however, that would rend ere it departed, the first two miles became almost insupportable. I felt as though I should drop from the saddle! Summoning heart, however, I again urged forward, when at the end of a third canter—each a terrible effort—hope revived—the horrid tension of the brain began to relax, and pains in the head to abate. I was in the middle of a fourth canter when, to my surprise, I came in sight of a buggy, which with that consideration that did *not* surprise, had been sent down the last four miles of the road to meet me. So, relinquishing Toby, by this time looking as though he had been driven through the river rather than the sun, I jumped into the buggy, and with a loquacious old Syce at my side, drove off to Mulnath, which I reached at three o'clock in the afternoon—having been in the saddle about five hours.

A hearty welcome, and then 'what would I eat, and what would I drink, and wherewithal would I be comforted?' were answered with a request for tea and bread. These and a bath were all that was wanting;—the head-ache had vanished! I was as thoroughly cured as though I had been under medical treatment for a month—and Toby had been my doctor. So you see I was not intending to entertain you with the "diary of an invalid," but simply to illustrate the value of Mofussul life and habits, that in place of drugs and potion substitute fresh air and vigorous exercise—"whilk (as the old Roxburgh Laird said) are far better than a' they doctor's stuffs!" Perhaps, also, it affords no unfair application of a good moral. Had a comfortable road-side inn proffered the temptation of a resting-place, the remainder of my journey might never have been completed—or my cure delayed for a month! It is often fortunate for us when we are irrevocably committed to a good thing.

BEFORE entering upon the subject with which I had intended principally to occupy this letter, I must tell you that I have just paid a visit to the civil station of Kishnaghur; and as it furnishes one or two features in Mofussul life I may have no other opportunity of mentioning, I may as well tell you all I saw. My visit was but brief, and therefore but little was afforded me either to see or to speak of.

An invitation to Mr. F—— and self from Dr. A—— to spend a day or two with him, having been accepted, a few changes of linen and other matters requisite for the trip, were packed up, and in charge of a khidmutgár (or table servant) and a bearer, sent off during the night (for want of a railway) upon an elephant. Between eight and nine in the morning we left



Mulnath in a buggy, and having driven the first three miles to a picturesque and sheltering grove of Mango trees, we there found our horses, which had been sent on at an early hour, waiting for us. Sending on the buggy-horse to Kishnaghur by the syce, or groom, we here mounted, and with as lovely a morning as one could desire—a delightfully bracing breeze, and a picturesque country, we started on our journey, and after what a City man at least terms a good hard ride, reached Bāgādangah, sixteen miles from Mulnath, at a little past ten o'clock.

Bāgādangah is an out-factory of the Mulnath concern, where, albeit we had no host to receive us, we found a very comfortable bungalow, which contained just enough of furniture to meet all the real wants of a traveller—a well-buit lower roomed dwelling of brick and mortar, with a thick thatch roof, such, no doubt, altogether as would have realized to the mind of the poetic artist, Blake, his "thatched roof of russet gold." Here, also, the exterior grounds upon all sides exhibit the improving taste of the ruling hand of Mulnath. Groves of trees, planted seven or eight years ago, now alike beautify the grounds, and afford shade, shelter, and comfort to all about the place.

The two servants had arrived, of course, long before us; and so, having enjoyed the immediate luxury of a bath and change of dress, we sat down to a most acceptable plain breakfast of hot toast, eggs, and tea, with such zest and appetite as exercise never fails to furnish.

An out-factory, I should here inform you, is simply a branch of the greater or head-quarters' factory. You may already have observed that the cultivation belonging to one concern, as in this of Mulnath here, may extend over distant and large quantities of land, or be separated one part from another by other cultivators, which is generally the case to a very great extent. Hence, in either case, you will see the necessity of so extensive a concern being divided into separate managements, which are placed under the control of assistant planters. The cultivation requires European supervision, and when I mention that the plant, when cut, rapidly spoils, you will further see the impossibility of the produce of a large concern being gathered and carried to any one common centre (a distance of possibly fifty miles), even were it convenient or practicable to carry on so great a quantity of operations in one place and at one time. Out-factories, therefore, are necessary to which the produce can early and readily be carried, and in each, at the manufacturing season, an assistant generally resides. If he be a married man, which for every reason is most desirable—it forms his established home; if a bachelor, he is free to roam from place to place, as the inspection of his cultivation, at all other than the manufacturing and sowing times, is all that is generally required of him.

Making Bāgādangah a half-way resting-place for horses, servants, and ourselves, we there remained for the day; and that is the manner in which a planter or other Mofussulite travels about the country,—not quite so rapidly



as by a railway transit, but I think far more agreeably. You must not suppose, however, that a planter's rides are confined to sixteen miles a-day, for when necessity demands, no rare thing at certain seasons, they extend, by aid, of course, of various horses, to thirty, and even forty miles in a day.

The next morning, servants and traps being sent on as before, our travelling operations were repeated, and crossing the river by ferry-boat, we resumed our ride towards Kishnaghur, a distance of sixteen miles further. Reaching a ferry at a place called Hanskålee (meaning the duck stream), we there found a large bhonliya, and learnt that Mr. H——, the well-known indigo planter of the firm of H—— and W——, had just landed and gone on towards Kishnaghur. So having crossed the horses, we remounted, and overtaking his baggage elephant on the road,—whereat, taking fright, my steed had well-nigh left me in a ditch,—galloped on at a pace which soon brought us into company. Mr. H——, who was riding a beautiful Burmah pony, appeared to have passed that time of life when hard riding has any charms, and therefore the remainder of our journey was pursued at a walk.

The approach to Kishnaghur, which is exceedingly pretty and woody, early indicates proximity to European city or town abode.—A beautiful avenue of Teak trees, shaded a remarkably fine smooth road, which at considerable length narrows, and then passes through a native bazar, and under one of the most picturesque and venerable looking gateways of Hindoo architecture I have ever seen. It is a quadrangular building, or tower, now mouldering into ruins, pierced at all sides by corresponding arches, which originally all possessed gates of massive and very elaborately though grotesquely carved and studded wood. It would appear to have formed the outer tower or entrance to the Rajbarry, the palace or residence of the present Maha Rajah Seeris Chunder Roy. Passing beneath the south arch of this building, and along a yet extensive well-kept road, we fairly entered Kishnaghur, and I, for the first time in my life, *a civil station*.

A civil station, I need hardly say, is so called in contradistinction to a military one; and contains those courts and offices of Government with their functionaries, that are distributed over the land to administer its laws, civil and criminal, and regulate its revenue affairs.

There is, first of all, the *Judge*, generally called the civil and sessions Judge, a first grade civilian. His court is what is called an Appellate Court;—that is, one to which cases of appeal from the decision of lower courts are referred. He tries all civil cases wherein the documentary evidence is in the English language, or such others, not involving claims beyond 5,000 Rupees, as are appealed to him from the inferior courts, and all cases of a criminal character occurring within his district, which probably embraces an area of from three to four thousand square miles. He has the power of imprisonment within the period of seven years, over all but British-born subjects—whose cases are transferred to the Supreme or Queen's Court of Judicature of Calcutta by the committing magistrate.

This privilege so justly and dearly valued, so tenaciously guarded, was, a few years back, when its safety was threatened by some proposed enactment, the subject of one of the most popular excitements perhaps ever known in Calcutta, and led to a great public demonstration at our Town Hall—since remembered as the *Black-act-Meeting*. A sort of compromise was made. The power of the judge in civil cases was confirmed, but the more important and objectionable clause, that effecting criminal prosecutions and personal liberty of the subject, was withdrawn.

You may ask—why all this?—should not justice be even-handed to all? Assuredly,—and “sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander;”—for which reason the answer is—let men be tried by their peers. If as conquerors, and rulers, civilizers and teachers, we assume to ourselves superiority, then bring up the pupils to the standard of the tutors; do not depress the higher to the lower.

For this to be understood, I need only inform you that the criminal law in use in our Mofussul Courts is the *Mohummudan Law*. In civil cases a European may probably obtain as fair a judgment in a Mofussul Court as in the Supreme Court of Calcutta; because, however much greater the danger of false witnesses, he at least loses none of his legal or civil rights. His case is tried by a kind of universal equity law, divested of much of the technicalities of our Judicial Courts, and hence simplified; in which the social usages of all parties, Christian, Mohummudan, and Hindoo, are necessarily respected. It is not so in a criminal prosecution, in which the Christian would lose the privilege of that much prized institute, Trial by Jury. He would be tried by a single judge, assisted, it may be, by his Mohummudan Law Officer.

When I speak of the greater danger of false witnesses, I refer to the facilities which Mofussul life offers for suborning such. Independently of the number of people banded together in one interest, there are no sharp-witted counsel to cross-question their evidence. The English witness-box of our Supreme Court has, no doubt, terrors peculiarly its own.

Next to the judge is the *Collector*, whose duty it is to attend to the collection of the revenue, and to enquire and decide respecting all questions that may arise relating to the revenue and the holding of lands. In what are called Principal Stations there will be found a *Commissioner*—a gentleman who takes precedence both of judge and collector, and has the supervision of all revenue affairs, and also possesses judicial powers to try cases of a criminal nature referred to him by the magistrate. To the commissioner, also, appeal cases lie from orders of magistrates respecting the removal and employ of native Umlah or executive officers.

Then we have the *Magistrate*, who in some large districts is assisted by a second, or what is called a Joint Magistrate. These are followed by an *Assistant to the Magistrate*, one learning his duties, and sometimes doing a little work in the office of the collector. His services are applied to



the disposal of petty cases referred to him by those officers. All these are civilians.

Of the native justiciaries there is, first of all, the *Principal Sudder Ameen*; in other words the native judge. Sudder signifies chief, and Ameen a commissioner, umpire, or arbitrator,—an office which is sometimes held by talented European or East-Indian gentlemen, possessing a thorough familiarity with the language, manners, and customs of the natives—qualifications which are of course essential for all placed in judicial authority over a people whose minds it is so requisite thoroughly to know before being able to understand the value of their evidence, and the various and peculiar influences which bear upon their conduct. The Principal Sudder Ameen is a Civil Judge only, and in his court are all cases, however important, in the first place tried. In the event of dissatisfaction with his decision, appeal, as already observed, lies to the civil judge; but in the event of the claim amounting to a greater sum than 5,000 Roopees, the appeal is transferred to the highest East India Company's Court, called the *Sudder Dewany*, in Calcutta. The salary of a Principal Sudder Ameen varies from 600 to 800 Roopees per month.

The *Sudder Ameen* is one having a minor authority and jurisdiction to the *Principal Sudder Ameen*. His power to adjudicate extends to cases not involving sums greater than 1000 Roopees; above that amount, but under 5000, they must be decided by his superior. The salary of the *Sudder Ameen* is about 400 Rs. per month.

The *Deputy Collector* may come next. The office of *Deputy Collector* was an appointment originally created by Lord Bentinck, for the purpose of bestowal on natives of the country. Hence it is in the majority of cases, I am told, held by them; but in some instances by duly qualified Europeans or East-Indians, not in the covenanted employ of the East India Company. Appeals from the authority or decision of the Deputy Collector lie with his own superior. Occasionally this officer is invested with the powers of a deputy magistrate. This is sometimes a measure of economy, and at others adopted with the view of promoting a speedier dispensation of justice.

The *Deputy Magistrate*, likewise, is generally, but not invariably, a native officer.

One more judicial functionary and the Bench is complete. This is the *Moonsif*—a petty judge, whose authority is limited to suits for claims within 300 Roopees. If above that sum, the suit lies in the Court of the Sudder Ameen, and appeals, also, from the judgment of the Moonsif, are made to that officer. All these gentlemen have, of course, their courts or offices, and several establishments of native Umlah and assistants—writers, peons or messengers.

Though last named—very far from being least esteemed or valued by the residents—is the *Doctor*, who is a *military* servant of Government, in medical charge of, not only his fellow Government officials, but the jail



inmates. To these duties it is very probable he adds those of some other branch of the service, as in the case of our host of Kishnaghur, who is also Postmaster—Registrar of Deeds—Inspector of the College, and Superintendent of the River Tolls. When I tell you that the tollage on the middle rivers alone yields an annual income, at a rough calculation, of about two Lacs and 18,000 Roopees—that is £21,800,—and that the number of boats paying tolls is said to be about 80,000, you will be able to form some idea of the extent of traffic on our Indian rivers.

But to my subject. To the civil station, then, as the nearest and only place of appeal, have all offences, grievances, and disputes occurring for forty miles round, to be referred—so that, when to the usual “glorious uncertainty of the law” and its delays, is added the yet greater evil—the corruption of all the native channels of approach to the tribunals, you will not wonder that the poor around so frequently prefer either “first losses,” or investing the planter with all the powers of judge and arbitrator in their numerous disputes, in place of the ruinous loss of time occasioned by a traispe to the civil station, and stoppage of all their little industrial affairs.



ASSISTANT MAGISTRATE'S BUNGALOW, KISHNAGHUR.

Just as we had entered the station we were met by Dr. A—— and Mr. A——, the assistant magistrate and collector, in a buggy. The former had unfortunately received a professional summons, to attend a lady patient eighteen miles distant, and was, therefore, under the necessity of committing us to the care, for that day, of his young friend Mr. A——, to whose bungalow accordingly we repaired, and by whom every possible attention was shown to us.

Though one bungalow differs little from another in its external form, its internal arrangements are of course capable of greater or less comfort and convenience, according to the means and wants of its inmates; and here, therefore, with something of the appliances of city life available, a bungalow being a constant residence, need be little inferior, as to its interior furnishing, to the usual "puckah houses," as ordinary brick and roofed buildings are termed in India. Of this latter kind are most of the houses in Kishnaghur, and very neat comfortable-looking dwellings the whole of them appeared to be.

Kishnaghur is, indeed, a delightful place, and for salubrity bears the very highest reputation. The only fault I can find with it is that, as a station, it is so very straggling; but as this only affords each dwelling a wider range of ground and garden, it is barely a fault after all. There is a handsome little



KISHNAGHUR CHURCH.

church, of which the Rev. Mr. Innis\* is the minister, and a Government College under charge of Professor Rochford,† where about 400 students receive a similar course of education to that imparted at the Calcutta colleges.

Kishnaghur also boasts a park, a truly beautiful English-like place. The centre is a race-course, whilst plantations of magnificent Teak trees, cultivated originally by order of Government, and the Sissoo also, everywhere meet the eye, and skirt and embower the paths, which are indeed a succession of shady groves.

\* Now (1858) the Rev. Mr. Dyson.

† Subsequently to the visit here described, a new college, represented in the drawing, has been erected, of which Mr. A. Smith is the present principal.

I must not omit to notice also the little Dāk bungalow which is here found—the first of those staging conveniences, already spoken of, with which we have met in this Mofussul trip. The Kishnaghur hostelry possesses more



KISHNAGHUR COLLEGE.

than ordinary claims to attention. It has a resident host—a very civil, intelligent, active little man, whose greatest declared pride is to “give satisfaction to his travellers.” That he succeeds, is abundantly borne evidence to by the innumerable testimonials contained in a very original and carefully guarded collection thereof—from the brief and sober assurance of a judicial or other grave functionary, that—

“ Mr. Peters, his bungalow, and servants, are equally worthy of praise;”—

down to the juvenile, hey-day, after-dinner declaration of an Ensign Popkisson, that—

“ Peter is a Brick! ”

subscribed to in the very poetical effusion of Mr. Cadet Brown, who declares,

“ So I will praise Peter wherever I go,  
And always speak well of his Dāk bungalow;  
If I always gets food just as good as he gives,  
In time I shall get jolly fat—if I lives! ”

The Doctor returned from his patient the following morning, and in the course of the day, amongst other places, we accompanied him in his customary visit to the jail. Here were confined upwards of 450 prisoners—some for debt, but the majority for criminal offences, from the higher crimes of



murder and dacoity, down to petty larceny and assault. The greater number of these men worked in irons upon the road. On entering the great ward, where nearly all the prisoners are at liberty, though most of them in irons, we were cautioned to keep close together, for although a most kind creature, Dr. A—— had not much confidence in these unhappy people. The looks of the majority of them, I must confess, were not in their favour, either as to that intelligence which would allow of their rightly weighing a grievance, real or imaginary, or that disposition which would create any hesitation as to revenge. The murder of poor Mr. Richardson, the magistrate, in the Allipore jail of Calcutta, a few years back, by the native convicts there, and subsequent assault upon Mr. Samuels in the same jail, are sufficient illustrations of this.



KUTUMBUH DAK BUNGALOW.

After visiting nearly every part of the jail, and the Doctor having inquired into every little want or grievance referred to him by the prisoners—tasted their drinking water—examined their rice—and attended to sundry other little matters affecting their comforts, we came away.

Completing two very pleasant days, we bade farewell to the good Doctor and our gentlemanly young host Mr. A——, and commenced our journey back to Bâgâdangah, which, after a ride of only one hour and a half (my friend's invariable custom being to go in the last few miles at one long gallop), we reached at half-past nine in the morning. Pretty fair evidence this of the virtues of Mofussul life—of the improving strength and riding capabilities of one who but a week previously had taken five hours to ride

twenty-two miles! A similar delightful and spirit-stirring ride next morning brought us, in like time and in happy condition, to Mulnath. Had I such a country, and such rides, with similar companionship at the same time, near Calcutta, I believe I should want nothing but the society of those dear to me in my native land to reconcile me to an exile's lot.

Now, having fairly wandered over the outskirts—exhausted nearly every preliminary;—having shewn you how we get here—live here—travel here, and how time passes and may be occupied here at the present season,—it is high time we made some nearer approach to the subject with which I promised more particularly to familiarize you by my Mofussul residence and letters,—the production and manufacture of indigo; but after all this riding and wandering, to say nothing of being wantonly dragged into the Law Courts and a prison, you may not be unwilling to take rest until another mail.



THE POST COACH IN.



PLOUGHMAN, WITH PLOUGH AND HARROW.

## LETTER IV.

*Mulnath, February 14th.*

THE season for cultivation here, the earliest operations of which (preparation of the ground) generally commences in February, is at hand; and as I like to begin at the beginning of all things, it is a very fitting time to say something about *the Land*, which must assuredly be at the root of my subject.

I am aware that ladies are not supposed to be particularly interested in matters of leases—revenue—land taxes—feoffs and forfeitures, and had I been addressing you thirty or forty years ago, might have hesitated even to name such things; but in the present day, I believe I need make no apology for saying just so much about these matters as may be necessary to render others, which are connected with them, intelligible.

Previous to the year 1829 Europeans were prohibited holding lands upon lease in India. It was conceived to be fraught with danger, not only to the security and well-doing of the Government, but to the interests and well-being of the people, amongst whom Europeans, thus mixing, would acquire a power liable, it was feared, to abuse. It became evident, however, that the chief source of evil was to be found on the other side,—in the inability of European planters to hold lands in their own names, which not only, in the words of their own Memorial to Government, “opposed such



obstacles to the successful prosecution of their industry as could never have been compensated but by extraordinary fertility of soil, and cheapness of labour," but occasioned a recourse to a system of fiction and concealment (land being held by Europeans under fictitious names—or in those of their servants), which was productive, as remarked by the then Governor-General, of "fraud, inconvenience, and litigation, alike injurious to the success of trade—to the peace of the community, and to the character of our countrymen."\* In short, so far from harm resulting in the abolition of the restrictions which had "notoriously failed of their purpose," it was the opinion of one of our cleverest statesmen (Sir Charles Metcalfe) "that the existence of these restrictions impeded the prosperity of our Indian Empire;—that their abolition was necessary for that progressive increase of revenue which was essential, and that every measure which was calculated to facilitate the settlement of our countrymen in India, and to remove the obstructions by which it was impeded, must, he conceived, conduce to the stability of our rule, and to the welfare of the people subject to our dominion."† The prohibition was therefore rescinded.

Many disadvantages, however, affecting the security of capital, attend the holding of land. For instance:—The first claimant on the soil is the Government, to whom a quarterly land-tax is paid, and in the event of the strictest punctuality not being observed in its payment, little or no ceremony is observed; the property is advertised in the Government Gazette, and sold to the highest bidder. Mere carelessness, therefore, on the part of an agent, (and, in almost all cases, agents there must be), in paying the Government dues, may sacrifice large property—vitiating every claim on the part of the rightful owner. Again; land rented from Government is generally in such large parcels that few Europeans, singly, are likely to have either the means or the inducement to become holders. Associations of merchants, or planters, therefore, are more likely to be possessors; and here the danger just described presents itself to each of them individually,—consequent on the payment of the rent involving such doubt and risk. According to the Hindoo law of inheritance a man's property is divided equally amongst his children. Hence, in the event of their being numerous, the official labour and arrangements connected with an estate would in a corresponding degree be multiplied. Partly on this account, and I understand, partly consequent on some ingenious evasions having been practised, Government now almost invariably refuse to grant what is called a *Bhutwara*—that is, a division of the property—limiting the responsibility of the various shareholders to that portion of the property which they really possess; so that estates being thus mixed up, when any Government quarterly sale is approaching, the different shareholders concerned in a property become

\* Resolution of the Government of Bengal. Revenue Department, dated 17th February, 1829.

† Minute of Sir C. Metcalfe. 19th February, 1829.

anxious as to the capability of all the co-shareholders to pay up their dues; for in the event of any *one* failing to do so, the whole property is placed in the Gazette, and the other shareholders, depending one upon the other, may thus receive no warning at all, or an insufficient one, to enable them to save their land. Hence parties are frequently known to send in a considerable sum beyond what is due by themselves for the purpose of making up any possible deficiency on the part of co-shareholders, for the recovery of which they have of course the chances of fortune—or it may be the consolations of the Law! Concealed or forged trusts, or sales, also, may be another pleasant source of peril—of dispute—litigation,—and labour lost.

Independently of risk in holding, there is difficulty in obtaining land, which, consequent to European enterprise in indigo districts, as you will hereafter see, has become so valuable that it is very seldom for sale,—or, when for sale, has acquired a price discouraging to the European speculator or planter. It is otherwise with the native capitalist. Not only is the honour and glory of being a Zumeendar, or landholder, a thing coveted and prized as giving him position and importance in the estimation of his countrymen, but he is a *dealer* in land, and being “to the manner born,” must naturally, in his experience and familiarity with his own country-people, have advantages in his trafficking which no European could possibly possess. The latter, on the contrary, is not a dealer in land; for the honour and glory of Zumeendarship he cares not one fig; it makes of him neither a knight-of-the-shire nor parish-beadle. He requires the earth to cultivate, and labourers to plough and sow it. But it is not every kind of earth that suits his purpose, and therefore he must select portions of land over a large space of country which, from its nature, is suitable for his cultivation. For this reason, and the fact that the same ground should not continuously be sown with the same crop, it could not profit him, nor the Ryut (the cultivating peasant) either, to buy or rent a whole tract of country in order to obtain a field here and a field there, which would require in a couple of years or so, to change its cultivation. Thus, what with the difficulties and disadvantages of holding land direct from the Government, and though there are many European landholders of that kind, there are far more who lease and hold land in smaller quantities under the Zumeendar.

A perpetual lease of land held under a Zumeendar is called a *Putnee*,—and the holder is called a *Putneedar*, who not only pays an advanced rent to the Zumeendar, but a handsome price for the same. Leases are also held for short terms of from three to ten years or so. These are termed *Ezarahs*, and the holders *Ezardars*, who pay an advanced rent and a *sulâmee*, or bonus, besides. In either of these ways the planter is enabled to obtain smaller portions of land,—about the quantity, probably, which he may require; and to him are all rights of Zumeendaree, and the villages therein situated transferred. He pays his rent to the Zumeendar, and the Zumeendar his to the Government. Here you will detect a repetition of the danger I described



in reference to partnerships. Should the principal landholder neglect to pay his rent to the Government, what becomes of the luckless under-tenant? It is possible that the Zumeendar may have sub-let his entire land to a variety of Putneedars; and in this case, it is true that they could unite in paying in the entire sum to Government, and deducting the same, according to their several proportions from their next rent to the Zumeendar; but unless the whole of them were sufficiently warned, and ready with one consent to effect this arrangement, or the few were willing to pay for the many, all would be sacrificed.

The landholders, or Zumeendars of Bengal, then, are principally natives; and here we fall upon another evil. Such is the dread which respectable natives have of being dragged into the Mofussul Courts in matters of litigation, and there, it may be, subjected to a variety of annoyances compromising that respect to which they rightly hold themselves entitled, that I am positively assured very few of the leading men live upon their estates, which are thus left to the care and management of agents. This is the more to be regretted, because some of the native gentlemen are *educated*; and I need hardly observe, that if education has done its part at all, the spirit in which the affairs of that class of landholders would be likely to be conducted, were they on the spot themselves, would certainly be an improved one; and this you will better understand from what I may have to tell you presently.

Thus, you see, the holding of land in Bengal is beset with difficulties and dangers; for here you observe the planter, and, what is much worse, the poor Ryuts, or peasants, are at the mercy, not, in very many cases, of the Zumeendars themselves, but of an inferior class of persons—their Nâibs or agents. It is just and necessary, therefore, that this be studiously borne in mind when I speak of Zumeendars generally hereafter.

The ground, then, we will first assume, is owned by native landholders, who, as I have already said, pay a quarterly land tax or rent to Government. This tax, according to a Revenue Settlement Act by Lord Cornwallis in 1793 was, with very humane intentions, made perpetual and unalterable in its amount in the provinces of Bengal and Behar; but, although Government thus deprive themselves of all benefit arising from any greater value which the land may possess one year over another, or any general improvement in its soil, productions, and value, which has been very great, they confer no benefit whatever upon the millions *who labour on it*. The advantage is all on the side of the Zumeendars, who, as the tax is not heavy, are seldom oppressed by the burthen even in bad seasons, and are therefore always the gainers in good ones, because their uncontrolled exactions upon the poor peasantry are, I am assured, the same under all circumstances, and neither regulated by conscientious equity nor benevolent considerations. I should be sorry to think that this admitted of no exceptions. But the Zumeendar, as already shown you in the case of the planter Putneedar, is very probably



not the only person through whose hand the land passes ere the labouring cultivator can obtain its use. It may be let and sub-let half-a-dozen deep; and as each holder in such case must have his profit out of this trafficking, the peasant of course finally pays for all! Let me explain to you *how*.

The original "nerik" or assessment of the village—that is the cultivator's rent for the soil, a rate fixed from time immemorial, and acknowledged by the English settlement law, is unalterable. Now there are two kinds of cultivators,—the Khood-kasht or permanent, and the Koorfah or itinerant. The latter are subject to any rent the landholders may choose to demand; the former hold their agreement from the year of settlement 1793, and whilst they pay their rents are not legally liable to be ejected, or to have those rents raised. Notwithstanding the illegality, however, the Zameendar sometimes, and in some way, does raise the rent, though more frequently he relies upon other and safer sources of profit. In the case I have just assumed, the last leaseholder, in order to cover the excess of jumma, or rental, at which he has purchased, and to derive any benefit from the transaction, brings a variety of influences, social and religious, to bear upon the tenants, to obtain from them compliance with an equal variety of demands and extortions upon their means. You almost need to be a Hindoo thoroughly to understand this. Speaking of the conduct of the native landholders towards their tenants, it is said—"Not a child can be born, not a head religiously shaved, not a son married, not a daughter given in marriage, not even one of the tyrannical fraternity dies, without an immediate visitation of calamity upon the Ryut. Whether the occasion be joyful, or whether it be sad, in its effects to the cultivator, it is alike mournful and calamitous."\* This is a terrible picture in "hard lines,"—drawn, it is true, about thirty-five years ago; but I am assured it is equally applicable to the present state of things. The immutability of Orientalism indeed, when not broken into by European education, renders this little to be surprised at. At the same time I am anxious to avoid, in what I may tell you, appearing obnoxious to the charge of that unjust spirit of generalising, which includes *all* with the many, or even the majority of a people in what may hence be characteristic of the mass. This is the more necessary, because I am not speaking from my own knowledge, but quoting from others, whose experience, if earnestly appealed to, might possibly furnish some amount of 'set off' on the creditor side; and if one feels this caution to be necessary in reference to a section of the people, however large, how much more requisite must it be when there is the risk of such remarks being applied to the "people of India" at large. Speaking of this, the Hon. Mr. Shore, in his admirable "Notes on Indian Affairs," observes:—"What shall we say to the attempt to generalise, upon mere local and partial observation, regarding nations as diversified in character and customs as those of Europe, and partially so relative to language? In those

\* Mr. Sisson's Report on Rangoon. 1815. Papers relating to the Settlement of Europeans in India.

of the different provinces will be found the usual proportion of good and bad. Instances without number may be adduced of roguery and honesty; habits of impurity and cleanliness; kindness of heart and cruelty; morality and licentiousness; low cunning and childish simplicity; extraordinary intelligence and bullock-like stupidity; falsehood and truth; cowardice and bravery; information and ignorance;—in short, of almost every quality that can be imagined. Nay, the very same people will, under different circumstances and opportunities exhibit the most opposite dispositions: So idle is it (as Heber observes) to ascribe uniformity of character to the inhabitants of a country so extensive.\* When, however, respectable Zameendars can travel home, or visit their estates *by train*, we may surely hope for a remedy to much of the evil to which I have been referring.

By the Zameendar then, or his under tenant, as the case may be, the land is farmed out to the Ryuts by Pottahs, or agreements, of whatever character may be determined on between them, either as to the amount to be paid, or the mode of paying it. The rate charged is from six to eight annas—sometimes twelve annas (two-thirds of a Roopee, or say one shilling and four pence) per Biggah, of which there are about three in an acre.† The Ryuts farm, of course, just as much as their means permit them; one taking possibly only twenty Biggahs, while another may rent three or four hundred.

The Ryut, in order to cultivate his land, being too poor to make the first outlay, must now seek the assistance of the usurious Muhájun, or native money lender; to whom, in order to obtain seed, advances for rent, and the various other expenses attending his little cultivation, he immediately mortgages the produce of the soil—the crop before it is sown! He must be provided with ploughs, with bullocks, and the services of assistant ploughmen, &c., and he must *live* whilst the crop grows: but to meet all these necessities the Muhájun gives little or no money beyond what is required for *rent*. The whole system is a mere barter. He induces—I should say he compels, the poor Ryut to be the purchaser of his merchandise. If he want seed to sow, the Muhájun supplies it at the shamefully usurious premium of 100 per cent. If he requires rice for domestic consumption he charges him 50 per cent., and if he be in need of any articles, such as clothes, in which the Muhájun does not deal, he makes him a money advance, for which he is

\* 1859. No better evidence of the variety of character to be found in the natives of India could possibly be obtained than has been afforded by the late Rebellion,—which has exhibited just such differences in conduct as are naturally attributable to those differences of character found in the people of every nation upon the earth; for if nothing could exceed the treachery and cruelty of "Cawnpore," surely no greater or more honourable contrast could be found than in the fidelity of those men who, superior to every temptation—every danger—and every bias or prejudice which might be supposed, from affinity of country, caste, and faith, to form so powerful a bond of union with the mutineers and rebels—were yet nobly faithful to their masters,—and that at a time when the power of those masters appeared to be in extremity.

† That is in Bengal; in the North-West Provinces the Biggah is nearly two-thirds of an acre. The word is frequently spelt 'Booghah.'



charged interest at the rate of 35 per cent.; but all *produce* advances are returnable *in kind* only. In some districts, however, I am told the Muhājuns supply everything.\*

On the realisation of the crop, whatever it be, the Muhājun, of course gathers it in, and should any excess accrue after all advances and charges are paid, the Ryut obtains credit at an ordinary rate, fixed by the Muhājun—generally the market rate, or a little below it. I will suppose that he sows one biggah of land with rice. To do so he will require from one-half to three-fourths of a mun of seed,† according to the vigour and freshness of the soil. In return, I am told the best land will yield about seven muns,—the middling description about five and a half,—and the inferior kind three to three and a half muns. I am here speaking of threshed rice. The paddy, or rice in the husk, would be about double this quantity. The average of these is about five and one third muns; and taking a corresponding average of the return of grain made to the Muhājun for the seed, the Ryut leaves himself only about three muns and twenty-six seers of rice, at the value of fourteen annas, or one Roopee (say, two shillings) per mun, as the reward of his labour. From this has further to be deducted the quantity of grain, with interest, advanced for domestic expenditure, and an equivalent for the amount of money, with interest, advanced for rent,—and then what can we expect to remain? In short, rice is significantly, and almost proverbially called the “Muhājun’s crop.” It appears to profit the Ryut literally nothing. He is housed and fed, and nothing more.

But mark, after all, the frequent result to the Muhājun; for notwithstanding his heavy terms, I am told, he seldom makes much money, and many of his class are even ruined! The fact is, that the system is so oppressive that the poor often break down beneath its yoke, and so the good debts scarcely cover the bad. The Ryut, possibly finding himself in a hopeless condition, runs away altogether, and leaves the Muhājun without the slightest remedy. This is declared to happen in very numerous instances; and thus, where to such instances are added many more, in which dishonest Ryuts have run into debt without the intention to pay, or making any honest effort to do so—results, by an unhappy inversion of judgment, are made to justify the causes which produced them, and the good are oppressed to remedy the evil partly done by the bad. So it is that between dishonesty on the one side, and a grasping, ignorant, and illiberal policy on the other, neither party is benefitted; and, despite all advantages of soil and climate, industry, under what would otherwise be the most favourable circumstances,

\* Mr. Shore (just quoted from), speaking of the necessity of advances to artificers and others in India, says:—“It is precisely the same in the cultivation of the soil. The land is subdivided into small portions, each tilled by its respective owner, who has his own plough and bullocks; nineteen-twentieths of these are so poor that without periodical advances at every harvest, to procure seed, and food to live on till the crop is ripe, they would not be able to cultivate at all.”

† A Factory mun (or maund) is equal to 74½ lbs.; and a seer (the fortieth part) 11b. 13ozs. In Calcutta the British Indian maund is 100lbs., and the native Bazar maund 82½b. 2ozs.



is crippled. On the part of the Muhájun, however, it must further be mentioned that he is frequently obliged to borrow money himself at a high interest: hence, in such cases, another cause of his exorbitant terms in order to cover his own risk.

With respect to the Zumeendar, be he first or last, oppression by him may be exercised in a variety of ways. First—in the rate he may demand, when no lease already exists, as rent for the land; for although, as I have told you, his masters have limited their demand upon *him*, and set a restriction on their tax, there is unfortunately no limit or restriction (except, as already explained, by legal fiction), put to *his* power in this particular over the poor Ryuts.\* Even the measuring and re-measuring of the land may be made a source of oppression, or the means of, or justification for increasing the amount of rent, which the Ryut will probably endeavour to avert by making an offer of additional price to be permitted to prosecute his labours in peace and quiet. Sometimes the unwillingness of the Ryut to have his land remeasured arises from the fact of his being conscious of actually holding or cultivating more than his jumma, or tenure, really represents,—a thing, it is said, frequent. Hence the Zumeendar's desire may be a very natural and justifiable one.

There is another and worse source of oppression which, though it may not be frequent, I have been assured is not by any means impossible or rare. This is a declaration of arrears of balance of land rent due, perhaps, over a series of years. In such a case the luckless Ryut's ignorance, of course, prevents much dispute about the matter. There are the books to prove it! The pantomimic clown's transfer of the geese to his wondrous pocket, and the blame to his neighbour, when he "saw him do it," is hardly more easy, impudent, and conclusive than, I am assured, can be the arrangement of such books to substantiate the unrighteous claim! Or, it may be, that the claim is not entirely false—however unjust—but is built upon some petty or forgotten debt of a man's father or uncle, which is brought up and nourished by interest and compound interest for numerous past years, till its proportions have increased to a bulk that is ruinous.

In the event of dispute as to the right of land, or other matter of litigation, the Zumeendar must of course carry the day; for, unhappily, want of education and of right principles, renders the suborning of witnesses a lamentably easy matter to one who has the means to pay for it. For the reward of a few annas, men in the employ, or *out* of the employ of the Zumeendar, whose influence is always to be regarded and feared, will swear to anything they have been tutored in! There is, however, in the present case, little probability of this measure being resorted to; for although it is generally thought that the natives are fond of litigation, it can only be indulged in by men of something like an equality of means.

\* "—there being no security on the part of the Ryut that a heavy crop may not be the forerunner of a heavier rent the succeeding year."—Major Ralph Smyth.

The poor Ryut must necessarily succumb to even the threat of a "mukud-dumah," or suit. Of other sources of oppression, of a social, religious, and feudal character, I have already spoken;—sources opened by every domestic event in the family of the great man, and which, to a degree that would be ludicrous did it not provoke far other feelings, afford pretexts for the infliction of some imposition on the unfortunate tenant.

Should the season turn out a bad one, and non-payment of rent be the consequence, the process then is confiscation of all the Ryut's little property; but if this prove insufficient, which is very probable indeed, considering the poverty of the men, the loss of course falls upon the Zumeendar.

As "cunning is the weapon of weakness" it may be supposed that the Zumeendar is sometimes in his turn the deceived. Unfortunately, indeed, there are more weaknesses than one to which this cunning is frequently subservient. There is weakness of principle—the natural consequence of that weakness of mind, the result of ages of depression, which begets both moral and physical apathy—and hence that want of honest exertions to fulfil engagements which in the minds of Zumeendars and Muhájuns very probably seems to justify those oppressive measures or terms which they think necessary to secure them from loss. Thus it is, however, that there is frequently a system of mutual aggression—of offence and defence; but it is declared that this principally originates in the unscrupulous grasping conduct of the higher party. From an experience of more than twenty years, of these the agricultural classes, Mr. F—— thinks that there are no people, taking them as a whole, who naturally would be more amenable to kindness, good feeling, and justice on the part of the superior or controlling power; but that their better inclinations have been discouraged—warped and corrupted by the long continuous operation of that selfish spirit which has never dreamed of benefiting *them*, and under which they are indeed little better than bondsmen and serfs. In short, his only surprise is that they are not very much worse than they are.

So much for the native Zumeendars. I will next assume that Europeans stand in that position; and here, in brief, it is almost unnecessary for me to observe that in such case the conduct of their affairs, and the interest of the poor under them, must be equally at the mercy of *their* education and disposition, though in other ways; so that you have but to remember all that a Zumeendar has it in his power to do,—all that he may be tempted to do,—and all that greater amount of influence or power which the education,—the energy, and position of the European confers upon him, to form a right estimate of his capability of being to the poor, as already said, either a blessing or a curse. The evils attendant upon any system or power must be equally the same in principle in either case, and only greater or less in reality as the absence or presence of education and right-heartedness may influence the minds of those who exercise that power. We know, therefore, at all events, on which side we have a right to throw the greater



amount of responsibility, and I cannot but hope that we may also, with the greater amount of confidence, anticipate that responsibility being properly met.

It may here be remarked that there are many ways in which not only liability to—but possibility of oppression must be less under European than native authority, which are independent of education. If the former be exacting, his exactions, as a writer of more than twenty years ago observes, “are limited to those made for the purposes of his trade.” His social habits and religious influences impose none; whereas in the case of the Zumeendar it is otherwise.

There cannot be a doubt, however, that a very large portion—perhaps far the greater part—of what has been charged upon both planter and Zumeendar, but more particularly the former, from his knowing less, may really be laid to their underlings—the middle-men,—officials and servants of the establishment, who, either through admitted custom, or imposition of belief that they are acting with the knowledge or authority, of the master, are guilty of a variety of exactions on the Rynts,—the latter unfortunates dreading their power or influence to do further harm. How far it is possible to have a check upon this is just the question, and a very important one. Whether all that might be done to remedy the evil is really done, I am not competent to say; but I will give you an illustration of some of the difficulties by describing to you what occurs perhaps daily in Calcutta,—even in the city,—and if under your very nose in the narrow house, how much more likely and easy in the broad field.

There is a practice, as you may know, in India, on the part of servants of taking what is termed “dustoorree” on purchases. This is a per centage of two pice in every Roopee (about three farthings in every shilling), on the price of the article, or the amount paid. Every servant who makes a purchase for you receives it. This is known and generally not objected to. The labour of the journey to the Bazar, has been his, and the choice of patronage. There is some show of justification; it is recognised everywhere. Like the Jew’s bond “the law allows it, and the court awards it.” You have a poor hawker, however, called in at the door. He has trudged and carried his load possibly, or paid a coolie for carrying it, in the sun all day, and profited nothing. You make a purchase and pay the seller. Your servants have had no more to do with it than the man in the moon; but on reaching your apartment you hear a squabbling at the door;—they are claiming their dustoree, or quarreling about its division. This you think not only the flesh, but the very forbidden blood also of the bond. In a storm of virtuous indignation you forbid it; and threaten fine and discharge, or annihilation if you hear of it again. The hawker departs; you return to your room, complacent in the thought of having vindicated justice,—but you wist not that the poor hawker, having gone fifty yards from your door, returns, and quietly and voluntarily pays the doorkeeper (or whoever else it may be) his





dustoorree! He that knows if he did not do so he would never be called into that door again—nor permitted to enter it without some special summons. There are many other hawkers more accommodating, and they would have the preference.

Now, in such an element as this, what remedy have you further? None, I believe, but to discharge the durwan, and sit at the door and ring the bell yourself! Just that abuse, then, which your durwan exercises over the hawker, I believe *every native official*, either in a factory or a Zameendar's establishment, from the highest to the lowest, exercises in some way over the poor Ryuts, or those with whom they have the slightest monetary dealings, who have not the courage to resist it. The whole social system of the people, in short, is one of "mutual absorption," inherent and as obstinately adherent to them as "frieze to birdlime."

Now the crops commonly sown by the Ryuts on their own account, are Rice—Tobacco—Sugar-cane—Rye—Soorsa (two kinds of mustard)—Moosnea, or Linseed—Chillies—Turmeric—Jeel, or Sesame—Wheat—Barley—Peas—Kulacc—Chunna—Urrah,—and a variety of other dalls or pulse which I shall be able to notice more particularly in their due seasons; and this brings me to a few remarks upon Indigo cultivation, as affecting the interests of its cultivators the Ryuts.

Indigo, though as I shall have occasion to shew you, possessing many real advantages, direct and collateral, is said not to be a popular crop with the Ryuts. No doubt there are circumstances under which this want of popularity will be accounted for and justified,—but if I had reason to believe that this feeling were either universal or constant; if I had not, on the contrary, reason, from all which I have been enabled to see here, to regard the cultivation as one capable, generally, of connecting itself advantageously with the happiness and well-doing of the poor of the land, and not as being necessarily oppressive to them, I confess I should feel about as much temptation to make the subject of its cultivation a matter of entertainment to you as I should to be the guest of a slave-holder in Kentucky—in order that I might picture to you the beauty and profits of his plantations—omitting the groans of his victims.

You will not suppose it to be my intention, however, to enter upon any critical examination of the value of one order of culture over another as affecting exclusively the immediate pecuniary interests of the people, or of dogmatizing on a question which would require more intimacy with the economy of Indian



INDIGO PLANT.

agricultural life than my personal experience can have furnished me with. So much has been said on both sides of this question, indeed—there seems such “ringing of changes” in the circumstances under which it is declared to be—now one thing—and then another,—so much appears to depend upon seasons—locality, and the conduct of persons, that I am led to think it can only safely be regarded in a *general* point of view. Individual experiences might produce extravagant results always likely to deceive.

The chief accusation which has been brought against Indigo culture is, I understand, that it has in some measure monopolised land which would otherwise have been devoted to crops of Rice—the most important article of food to the native of India, and which it is assumed he could cultivate with more advantage to himself.

Here, as in all disputed matters, we plunge into half-a-dozen propositions and inferences which, in fairness, require to be disposed of, in order to reduce the question to its simplicity. First—partly anticipating a subject I shall speak of hereafter,—I may mention that there are two kinds of Rice, one of which, from being sown in low wet lands, never can be interfered with by Indigo, which is totally unsuited to such soil. In some districts this kind of rice is said to form nearly one-half, and in others very nearly the whole of the produce. Secondly,—it is asserted that at least four-fifths of the lands occupied by planters are, from their nature, altogether unfit for rice. But this estimate cannot be intended to apply individually to every district,—as, for instance, it would be false in reference to this of Kishnaghur, where all the high land cultivated for Indigo is equally suitable for Rice; whereas in parts of Jessore and Dacca, where land is low, and large alluvial deposits occur, Rice would not succeed in such a soil at all. What is called *Chur* land,—that is, land formed by deposit near rivers after the periodic inundations, and well adapted for Indigo, is unfit for the cultivation of rice, until time has altered its character, and rendered the deposit no longer liable to early inundations. Again—in high land districts, soil will not yield a good crop of rice for more than two consecutive years. In the third year, I am told, it will scarcely yield enough to pay the expense of cultivation. The same land, however, alternated with *Indigo* and *Rice* exhibits no symptoms of decay for several years. This system, it appears, prevails throughout the Kishnaghur district.

Thus, therefore, you will observe how much depends upon *locality*.

We now, perhaps, come to what I believe may be termed the root of the matter,—the connection between the Planter and the Ryut; and this brings me back to where I left the former in his capacity of Putnecdar, to whom, I informed you, all Zumeendaree, or landed rights, were ceded—the soil and the villages thereon. Here it is urged that the Planter's lease of land gives him, or should give him, no title to *the people* who live upon it, whose services and whose land are, nevertheless, to a certain extent, indented upon for the cultivation of Indigo. To this the mind yields an involuntary



acquiescence. But we thus jump into the province of the legislator who dictates what *should* be, and not the scribbler who describes what *is*. Systems and customs appear to have grown up in India, having had their origin in times, and under circumstances and combinations, for which hardly a parallel could be found in English life or history, and hence require to be judged of with caution and leniency; whilst, just as obviously, some little time and patience are necessary for that remedy and improvement which being already manifested in so large a degree, it may surely be anticipated will continue to progress. My present object is to show you things as they *are*—not what they might be under a different constitution, such as may exist hereafter when laws and people have undergone those mutations which, like a few moves on the chessboard, disarrange and re-arrange the relative positions of every figure upon its chequered surface. Hence, however,—referring to this indent on the tenant, which, like so many other things, is often, I believe, made without even the knowledge of the Planter, or in excess of what he might approve,—may in part arise the alleged aversion of Ryuts to an application of their labour which may not be voluntary, whether remunerative or not. But this observation can only apply to *old* tenants—not to *new*, who take leases of land, just as an English peasant rents his farm, with full knowledge of all its conditions; nor, of course, to Ryuts who lease land independently of the Planter, and yet take advances for the cultivation of his Indigo. With these latter the undertaking must be voluntary. The Planter, however, declares that his object in obtaining Zumeendaree rights is not so much to obtain *land* as to secure the realization of his just claims from those who cultivate it on his behalf, and with his money; because, as already explained, no crop can be extensively grown in Bengal without the Ryuts receiving *an advance* of money for their labours,—a system prevailing throughout India; and when such advances are made in villages where the Planter has no influence or authority, the whole, it is urged, may be lost from breach of contract on the part of the Ryut, or illegal and possibly violent interference on that of the Zumeendar. Here is another branch of the innumerable ramifications of this almost interminable question. The last-named party is taxed with sometimes opposing, from various self-interested motives, the cultivation of the Planter's indigo, by inciting the Ryuts to a breach of contract, or to a quarrel. Hence the Planter's assertion that opposition to the cultivation of Indigo lies more frequently with the rich than the poor. No man, I imagine, would maintain that this can be its exclusive source. To do so would be to assume that all Planters were alike, and all faultless, and that no evil or grievance ever arose in which the peasant could be right—the Planter wrong, and the interfering party actuated by some little sense of justice or benevolence; a state of things not likely to obtain until every Englishman be found with cherub wings on his back, and every native with hoofs instead of toes to his feet. The misfortune under which the poor of Bengal labour is not merely that they should be so entirely under the control



of those who, as I have shown you, have it in their *power* to do them wrong, but that their utter want of education renders them inconsistent with themselves. Unable to read one single word or figure, what control can they have over those with whom or through whom, their little transactions lie?—and, lacking judgment and courage, they voluntarily rivet the fetters of bondage to systems and practices amongst themselves that impoverish them, and which only a little intelligence, unanimity, and resolution, are necessary to overthrow.\*

To return to the European and his Ryut tenants. The fact—the expectation and demand that tenants, whether old or new, should cultivate a certain reasonable portion of their land for Indigo on account of the Planter—is at once and frankly admitted; but that it acts oppressively upon them, or renders their position in any degree inferior to what it was before, under the Zumeendar, is emphatically denied.—Here, then, is the immediate point at issue.

If it be shewn that the Ryut is a loser by the new connection, it must be in a proportionate degree (at all events, with the *old* tenants), an oppression; but if, on the contrary, it appears that the advantage is greater, or even equal, there will be none,—as certainly, it has been remarked, if the Ryut obtains his usual profit or returns, “it matters little to him whether it be derived from Indigo or anything else.” If, however, it be shewn that the same reward, though it were nothing more, is obtained with less labour and trouble, which is declared to be the case,—to say nothing of the collateral advantage of assumed aid and protection from a more enlightened and liberal minded master in the European than in the Zumeendar’s Nâib and village Muhâjun—then it certainly *does* matter. I am assured that there have been seasons at which the Rice crops failing, the Ryuts have been thrown back altogether upon their Indigo and the aid of the Planter,—aid which I have heard of being extended, on some occasion of a severe scarcity or famine in this district, by one firm, in loans to the Ryuts to the extent of two Lacs of Rupees, or £20,000; the return for which was to be made partly in Rice and partly by the cultivation of Indigo, at a more prosperous period,—probably the following year. Philanthropy, of course, must not rush in to claim all this as her exclusive offspring. It is instanced only as an illustration of one of the advantages which have attended, and may again attend the presence of the European planter. Whatever amount of business interest may have mingled with the loan of so large a sum of money—indeed, furnishing the means and warrant for so great an outlay—(for cultivation, with the poor cultivators themselves, might else have died), it would be an outrage against British humanity to suppose that the dictates of duty

\* “The Ryuts are all more or less poor; few have any capital; and to enable them to cultivate at all they are obliged to borrow money at a heavy interest. Their ignorance and inability to read or write, also places them at the mercy of the money lenders, who are often the middlemen themselves, who lend money in advances, and who make them sign receipts for more than has been lent them. This, with their own occasional waste of money, in marriages, festivals, &c., keeps them poor.”—*Stat. and Geog. Report of the 24 Pergunnah Districts*. By Major Ralph Smyth, Bengal Artillery, Revenue Surveyor.

and benevolence had no share in the matter, as the period was one of extreme calamity—in short, an inundation and famine, when those who lent had themselves been heavy sufferers.

Thus you will observe how much must depend upon *times and seasons*.

In reference to interference with the cultivation of rice, my host here observes: "The rice crops are to us secondary only in importance to the Indigo. By their aid, six months of the Ryuts' rents are paid, whilst their cold weather crops provide the remainder. If, therefore, we pursued a system of grasping and ruinous monopoly, should we not wash the bridge from under us? From whence should we pay *our* rents to the Zumeendar, if by an insane and cruel line of policy towards the Ryuts we deprived them of the means of paying *theirs* to us—or of cultivating the land on our account? It is true—all planters are not alike. There are, no doubt, harsh planters, as there are harsh masters in every occupation and pursuit in life, but such men are no greater in their wisdom than their humanity, nor in their prosperity than either: unwilling labour is the most expensive of all labour."

With respect to Rice,—that kind, as I have explained to you, with which alone Indigo can interfere, and which, Mr. F—— considers the *least profitable* of all the Ryuts' crops, he affirms that the only effect which the cultivation of Indigo has had upon that produce, has been to incite a greater amount of industry and care in producing it, in order to meet the increased demand of an increased population around the Factories; and, lastly, as to Indigo itself—he declares to me his conviction that, by an endeavour, with common honesty and ordinary care and industry to carry out their engagements on the part of the Ryuts, the cultivation of the plant would generally be just as profitable as that of most other crops; but that in too many instances these honest endeavours, from lack of energy and principle, are entirely wanting. In truth, from all I can gather of the matter, there appear to be just three things which seem to deprive them of incentive to exertion;—first, the blood-sucking plague of "*Dustoorce*," under which, well might the poor Indian peasant exclaim with the Preacher,—“What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?” Secondly—their connection with the Muhájun—the evils of which, equally obnoxious to the Preacher's text, I have already shown you; and, thirdly, the system of *advances*. If the entire fruits of their Indigo labours had to be received *on completion*, they would feel a greater amount of interest in the result; and devote, it is likely, more of their energies to the planter's crop, to make the best of it; but no sooner have they received his advances than, 'ten to one,' they must go off to the Muhájun; nay, it is possible his man accompanies them to receive the money, and to the Muhájun is every pice of those advances very probably made over. They are most likely—indeed almost surely—already in his debt, and have to make their customary arrangements with him for supply of provisions for the year. With all his poverty the Bengal peasant, like his brethren of the city, for whose im-



prudence I can vouch, is improvident also to a remarkable degree. He will lay out on a marriage or festival, as much as would keep him for several months, nay, for a whole year. The Honourable Mr. Shore, whose experience, added to his benevolent and impartial spirit in all things affecting the natives of India generally, renders him a safe authority, observes:—"The improvidence of the natives of India, particularly of the poorer classes, is one of their strongest characteristics (as indeed was generally the case with the peasantry of England, before the institution of savings banks, benefit clubs, &c.) The men are constantly borrowing sums, which they have no reasonable means of ever repaying, to expend in marriages and feasts, from the vanity of having the credit of giving fine entertainments; and not unfrequently take advances from two or three different individuals, especially from the indigo-planters, who are defrauded to an immense extent in this way."

Elsewhere, also, Mr. Shore remarks:—"The majority of the lower orders of natives, on occasion of a marriage in the family, or other ceremony, never think of future consequences: they are urged by vanity and the instigation of their relatives and connections to make as fine a display as possible; and often borrow sums which embarrass them for years, or even for their lives." So the money lender's bill is increased, it may be, by something of this kind, and in this way the Ryut makes himself over to the Muhájun—and has thus "two masters." The money he has received from the one has gone,—and with it, it is reasonable enough to suppose, a certain share of interest in the object for which it was given. The other has to be conciliated to keep supplies in order—and so there is likely to be, whether necessary or not—a clashing of interests in the distribution of the Ryut's time and labour. The Muhájun uses his influence to secure attention to *his* crops (so they may be termed), and the planter is under the necessity of keeping three field servants to every 300 Biggahs of land to prevent neglect of the Indigo. "If (says my friend here) the Ryuts were honest and did not need this supervision, how much more gladly would I distribute the money devoted to this purpose (about one thousand Roopees a month) amongst themselves as extra pay for their plant, than in payment of an establishment only to look after them.\*"

\* Mr. Shore, speaking twenty years ago, of the severity generally attending agreements for work in England, says:—"In India it is totally different: after the advances are made, a man cannot sit down quietly in anticipation that the work will be duly performed, or the ground tilled by the stipulated time; either he or his agents must be constantly on the alert to stimulate the people to their work, and see that they do not squander the money they have received, or waste their time in going to some fair or festival, till the season is passed. In the old times, at sowing-season, an Indigo planter would keep seven or eight horses in constant work in inspecting the lands, to the owners of which he had made advances; and with all the labour and precaution that can be taken, a certain portion of money will be lost by the negligence or improvidence of the people to whom it has been given. Negligence and improvidence are, to a great degree, characteristic of the English poor; but the plan of paying regular wages on Saturday nights, after the work has been performed, acts as a great check there; to use a common phrase, the people feel it to



If the profits from growing Indigo were greater, or so great as not to require effort on the part of the Ryuts to realise them, that might be likely enough to stimulate to more care, and to remove all temptations to dishonesty; but no marvellous results are claimed for it; they are uncertain and variable, and so also are those of the cultivation of rice. An advantage, however, here attends the division of crops—for a season which is bad for Indigo—as a very wet one,—is generally good for rice, and an unfavourable rice crop, in a very dry season, may be balanced by a remunerative one of Indigo. The affairs of the Ryut, as those of all agriculturists, must of course, be subject to variation of fortune under variation of circumstances. They are equally at the mercy of the elements with the planter. A bad season yields the former a poor crop, and the latter a scanty produce. That the Ryuts are at the mercy of their own exertions too, who can doubt, for what man is not?—But can we expect poor creatures who feed upon boiled rice and a scrap of fish to have the unwavering energies of the full-blooded English peasant, who washes down his bacon, eggs, and greens, with a pint of porter or “home brewed?” Not till the dormouse yokes with the ox—or work-house starveling—

“Shakes his ponderous lance and braves the dread of Troy!”

An Indian sun, and an Indian shower are not pleasant to sit *weeding* under. Is it wonderful if men are found to shirk them?—I am assured, however, that there are very many Ryuts who, honest and industrious, seem almost invariably (the casualties of season of course excepted) to be successful in their Indigo cultivation; and others almost as consistently to be the reverse.

Assuredly, the character of the natives of Bengal (and here I speak from my own experience) is a strange inconsistency. Indifferent, slow, and apathetic in their ordinary duties, they will yet, *under excitement*, either of necessity or reward, out-do all others, possibly, in the accomplishment or endurance of things of ten-fold greater magnitude or labour. The man who will take two hours to go an errand, or perform some trifling task which a European would do in ten minutes, and want a Motiya, or porter, to carry an insignificant parcel that may be given to him, will, on getting leave to go to

be “No work no victuals,”—the effects are much worse where the system of advances is in force; and in India an immense number of suits are preferred, of a nature which in England are scarcely known, and that, too, without supposing any intentional roguery on the part of those who are employed.

But, unfortunately, there is no scarcity of a dishonest proportion of the people in India, any more than in any other country. Many artificers and cultivators will deliberately take advances without any intention of performing the stipulated work: others receive money from two or three employers at once, although they know that they will not be able to fulfil their engagements; and I am sorry to say that this spirit has occasionally been fostered by English merchants and Indigo planters, in their anxiety to promote their own, and injure their neighbours concerns,—short-sighted policy, as they have at length discovered. Here, again, is another source of litigation, which would never exist were the system of performing work by hired labourers substituted for that of making advances, which, however, is prevented by the poverty of the people.”—*Notes on Indian affairs by the Honourable Frederick John Shore, Judge, &c., Farruckabad.*

"his country," shoulder his bundle, and travel a journey on foot, and in a period of time that would surprise you. Look at the poor rice-fed peasants who carry you a dāk journey. I should like to see a dozen or sixteen Englishmen, not trained for months previously, four of whom at a time, changing every half mile or so, would take up a palkee, in itself weighing about 400 pounds, and with a gentleman of probably thirteen or fourteen stone weight inside it, trot off a distance of twenty-two miles without stopping! A planter, also, tells his servants in the evening that he must be at such a station, or factory, sixteen miles off, the next morning. He rises at five o'clock—canters off on horseback at six, and on reaching his destination finds his servants there before him,—cooking and preparing his breakfast! They have walked there in the night.

But to return. No one dreams, I believe, of Indigo making the poor Ryuts' fortune. Poor they are at the best, and poor they will remain, I fear, until by great moral, educational, and other changes, towards which Planters themselves are the most bound to contribute, the condition of the whole body of the people be raised;—then, indeed, they may have sense to abolish extravagancies—courage to resist impositions that impoverish them, and enlightenment enough to understand some of the simplest principles and maxims in human conduct and affairs. All that appears claimed by the Planters themselves is that the Ryuts under them have, in some degree, generally improved in their condition, and not retrograded; and that a variety of advantageous circumstances, sometimes experienced in a marked degree, attend the connection with the factory and the cultivation of Indigo.

Doubtless if the returns of the Planter were sure and uniform, those to the Ryuts would be improved; but the risks are extremely great: a few showers too many, and a Lac of Roopees may be gone in a day!—or, on the other hand, too few, and nearly equal loss is occasioned. The Planter, however, declares that he is as liberal as circumstances permit him; and, in the district around here, points to the fact that whereas at one time the Ryut was paid only one roopee for ten bundles of plant, he is now paid the same sum for *four*. But *the wasting canker of 'Dustoorree' yet remains*; and until that abomination be removed, the Planter will be debited with the odium of loss arising from the extortion of his servants, and the capabilities of the crop to benefit the cultivator never fairly known or tested.

That, notwithstanding all disadvantages, the gigantic capital pointed to by the Planters—upwards of a million-and-a-half of money, yearly engaged in the manufacture of Indigo; and which, whether actually remitted from England, or retained in India for the same object, is to be regarded equally as capital imported into the country, and in large part expended amongst the people—must have benefitted them in some degree, seems to have been not only admitted, but, by many, very emphatically dwelt upon. Nor is this all. The enterprise and energy of the European have increased the utility and value of the soil. Vast tracts of land which, but for him, it is maintained, would



have remained the jungle-haunt of the wild buffaloe—the tiger, or the boar,\* have been brought into use and cultivation, and old tracts more carefully tilled; and the question is asked whether in this way, also, benefit must not have arisen to the people.

But all this, of course, is not enough. There is wanting not only the gold and the energy of the European, but his heart and his head to ensure the distribution of his gifts in the right direction—to see, as far as in him lies, that the cultivators by whose toil he profits are profited in return; to labour to put a check upon the infamous system of “dustoorees;” to be assured that the poor are not further despoiled of their reward by the villainy of underlings, who “dressed in a little brief authority”—abusing its duties—compromising the honour of their Christian master’s name, and desiring either to curry favour, or to get credit for successful management, have it in their power at least, and I should fear too often in their practice, to press the Ryuts in their arrangements, and themselves to fatten on the earnings.

Thus, and lastly, you will see how much will depend upon *character*; for if the spirit of a good planter be insufficient, as I have shown you it may be, by his own example to prevent oppression, how much more likely must the pernicious example of a heartless or avaricious one be to foster and augment it.

It has been said that “all the advantages which flow to the natives of India from the cultivation of Indigo by European planters, have their source in the amount of foreign capital employed, which creates a demand—first, for their labour; and secondly for their land;” but I think it will be admitted that the home commodity of *character* forms as essential a part of the Planter’s capital, as his money,—and very frequently a far more fruitful one; for if we are told that “Paul may plant, and Apollos water” to little purpose without the grace or help of God, so might the vines of Italy as well be expected to germinate on the snowy peaks of the Himalayahs, or the buttercup on the Arabian sands, as the poor and ignorant to flourish amidst the means of wealth, if those who rule, neither promote, direct, nor permit its enjoyment.

As to the inquiry, whether and in what degree the people of the country have hitherto benefited generally by the cultivation of Indigo, opinions must be sought from those whose position and means of information qualify them to speak on broad grounds. That the rich—the Zameendars—have been benefited,—they whose possessions have been doubled in value by the conversion of large quantities of land, either covered with jungle, or unfit, from their quality, for the growth of crops ordinarily grown in India, into cultivated soil,—there appears to be no doubt whatever.† That those, also,

\* Sir Walter Gilbert, as keen in sport as gallant in war, told me that he remembered hunting the boar over the lands around the spot whence I am now writing.

† “Some years ago, when Indigo was not so generally manufactured, one of my estates, where there was no cultivation of Indigo, did not yield a sufficient income to pay the Government assessment; but,



who are attached as servants to the Factory on regular wages—many of whom, of course, originally belonged to the poor class, and who, collectively, from probably nine hundred factories in the Bengal Presidency, form a very considerable body of men—have benefited, there are none to deny; for, indeed, as already implied, they are generally supposed to take care of that themselves, and there are no leviers of “dustooree” upon them, or their regularly paid wages. It is the question affecting *the really poor*—the labouring peasant, that will be more interesting to you; and here, having said so much to show how variable must be the results, you will not suppose that I am illogically instancing the *past* as proof that the *present* must necessarily be one and the same thing; but with no knowledge why there should be retrogression, I leave it to others, more learned than myself in the matter, to show wherefore that present should disadvantageously differ from the past,<sup>†</sup> and simply tell you what I find upon record, which may not be without interest.

At the time when the question of permitting Europeans to hold land in India came upon the tapis, Government issued circulars to the magistrates of the various provinces in Bengal, directing them to state “whether it was necessary, for the effectual subjection of the Indigo Planters and servants to the control of the law, that any further legislative provisions should be made in addition to those which already existed;” and demanding also information as to the general character of the European Indigo Planters residing within their jurisdiction, in regard to their transactions with, and treatment of the natives around them.

The fact is that up to that time, now about twenty-four years ago, the conduct of Indigo Planters had been pictured in no pleasing colours, and in too many instances, no doubt, with good cause. A very different class of persons, I believe, were then to be found in charge of Factories from those generally existing in the same position now, and bad conduct is always more prominent than good. Hence, as—

“The evil that men do lives after them,  
The good is oft interred with their bones;”

the worst side of the picture was the better known—and, of course, far better it should be so, or there would be no correction. The Government

within a few years, by the introduction of Indigo, there is now not a Biggah on the estate untilled, and it gives me a handsome profit. Several of my relations and friends, whose affairs I am well acquainted with, have in like manner improved their property, and are receiving a large income from their estates. If such beneficial effects as these I have enumerated, have accrued from the bestowing of European skill on one article of production alone, what further advantages may not be anticipated from the unrestricted application of British skill, capital, and industry to the very many articles which this country is capable of producing, &c., &c.”—*Speech of Baboo Dwarkanauth Tagore.*

<sup>†</sup> 1858. By some the declared unpopularity of Indigo is attributed to a falling off in the produce. It is said that the plant, which at one time was six and seven feet in height, now from constant cultivation

inquiry drew forth an innumerable host of reports—a mere epitome of which half fills a volume. They embraced not only the conduct of Planters, but the question of the effects which the cultivation of Indigo had produced on the interests of the people. These reports expressed a variety of opinions. As touching the Planters—preponderating in their favour. On the one hand they were accused of adopting unjustifiable means of obtaining, at the smallest possible cost, all the Indigo which they were capable of manufacturing;—of driving hard bargains with the Ryuts—of taking advantage of their wants, their weakness, or cupidity, and occasionally, when necessary, using force—or by some means compelling Ryuts to enter into Indigo engagements, and refusing to allow them ever to free themselves from such engagements—to which may be added the more justifiable and bitter complaints—against the extortions and oppression of the *Amlah*, or Factory servants.\* On the other hand, the Planters obtained credit for being held in much esteem by the natives—for being constantly called upon to arbitrate in disputes between relatives and neighbours,—frequently dispensing medicine to the sick—advice to those in difficulty—pecuniary aid to those in need on the occasion of family events, which would otherwise involve them for life with native money-lenders,—and for their never failing acquiescence in the wants and wishes of their poor neighbours, and thus exalting the character of the British name, and so forth. With reference to the cultivation of the Indigo itself, the Report indicated that the favour or aversion of the natives seemed to vary with the locality; for whilst we are told that “instances are adduced by the Governor-General in Council, in their Revenue Letter, 1st January, 1830, of great eagerness on the part of the Ryuts to induce Planters to settle in their respective neighbourhoods,”—others elsewhere are represented as being altogether averse to it.

In selecting expressions of opinion, then, I can perhaps hardly do better than cite those of persons whose sympathies are most likely to lie with their own countrymen. One of the most gifted and trustworthy of native gentlemen, the eminent Rammohun Roy, who, you may remember, visited and died in England,—though observing that, in his opinion, the condition of the peasantry generally had not been improving within his recollection, and was indeed of a most melancholy description—makes exception in respect to Ryuts engaged in the cultivation of Indigo, and says:—“As to the Indigo Planters, I beg to observe that I have travelled

of the same earth is of comparatively stunted growth, and hence less profitable to the Ryut who cultivates it. But this I find controverted by the assertion that if such a result existed, it would be equally manifested in the cultivation of *Rice*. It is declared that in the Kishnaghur district, at least, when the season is favourable, the soil now yields just as fine a crop of Indigo as it produced twenty years ago.

\* The English planter protects the Ryut from the Zameendar and village Malik; and although his own servants commit great extortions, they are probably little, if any, worse than those of the native wealthy classes. Mr. Barwell, Commissioner of Allypore, speaks of “the extortions which, under sanction of their (the planters’) names, are frequently practised by their retainers and dependents, in common with



through several districts in Bengal and Behar, and I found the natives residing in the neighbourhood of Indigo plantations evidently better clothed and better conditioned than those who lived at a distance from such stations. There may be some partial injury done by the Indigo Planters; but, on the whole, they have performed more good to the generality of the natives of this country than any other class of Europeans, whether in or out of the service."

Dwarkanauth Tagore, another highly intelligent native gentleman, and competent witness, also says—"I beg to state that I have several Zumeendars in various districts, and I have found that the cultivation of Indigo, and the residence of Europeans have considerably benefited the community at large: the Zumeendars becoming wealthy and prosperous; the Ryuts materially improved in their condition, and possessing many more comforts than the generality of my countrymen, where Indigo cultivation and manufacture are not carried on; the value of land in the vicinity greatly enhanced, and cultivation rapidly progressing."\*

In concluding this subject it may not be uninteresting to know the opinion which one amongst the most laborious and talented of our Governors General, Lord W. Bentinck, came to upon the subject of Indigo planters at the time of the inquiry I have alluded to; because it gives so much weight to all that has been said, and can be said, on the subject of the important bearing which the conduct of Europeans has upon the condition of the people, and of the good which they *have it in their power* to bestow around them. The Governor General's "minute" hints at much of the evils charged against the planters at that time, and the causes which produced them; whilst it indicates that remedy which time has, no doubt, in so large a measure already provided in an improved class of Europeans now to be found in charge of Factories. Commenting on the supposed misconduct of Planters towards the Ryuts and each other,—their peculiar position,—the disadvantages they laboured under in respect to holding land,—in establishing their just claims by legal means,—in having to procure the plant through a system of "advances"—"in all branches of trade known to occasion much embarrassment, and to lead to much fraud;"—their having no means of preventing encroachment of rivals, or of recovering their dues from needy and improvident Ryuts,—and, lastly, on the restriction upon the resort of Europeans to the country, compelling the houses of business to employ persons in the interior whom they would not have employed had they possessed a wider scope of choice—his Lordship says: "But under all the

all other native servants, whether public or private, in our employ." The planter also assists the Ryut with advances to pay his rent, and saves his land and bullocks from being seized for arrears. The terms of repayment in Indigo, which he exacts, are indeed far from favourable to the Ryut in many instances; but they appear to be less burthensome than those of the native usurer, to whom the Ryut would otherwise be obliged to have recourse, and "involve" himself "for life."

\* Papers relating to Settlement of Europeans in India.

above circumstances of disadvantage, the result of my inquiries is, a firm persuasion (contrary to the conclusions I had previously been disposed to draw) that the occasional misconduct of the planters is as nothing when contrasted with the sum of good they have diffused around them. In this, as in other cases, the exceptions have so attracted attention, as to be mistaken for a fair index of the general course of things. Breaches of the peace being necessarily brought to public notice, the individual instances of misconduct appear under the most aggravated colours; but the numerous nameless acts, by which the prudent and orderly, while quietly pursuing their own interests, have contributed to the national wealth, and to the comfort of those around them, are unnoticed or unknown. I am assured that much of the agricultural improvement which many of our districts exhibit may be directly traced to the Indigo planters therein settled; and, that, as a general truth, it may be stated (with the exceptions which, in morals, all general truths require to be made,) that every Factory is in its degree the centre of a circle of improvements, raising the persons employed in it, and the inhabitants of the immediate vicinity, above the general level. The benefit in the individual cases may not be considerable, but it seems to be sufficient to show what might be hoped from a more liberal and enlightened system."

May "a liberal and enlightened system" be the prevailing and rewarding policy of the British planter in India; and prove indeed sufficient to show that "what might be hoped for" from the enlightenment—the example and superior power of educated English gentlemen, has been realised in the universally confessed improving condition of the many thousands of poor, amidst whom an Almighty hand, for great ends and purposes, has placed them.

I greatly wish to see a "Planter's Calendar," wherein—in addition to those tabular statements we see in the Calcutta papers, of "*out-turns*" of Indigo for the season by the various factories throughout the country, which are published I believe more to gratify a little spirit of vanity as to the most successful plantership, than for any real value in the information conveyed—there should be a *second* table of statistics, showing the number of villages and Ryuts pertaining to each Factory;—the number of schools and hospitals established under its auspices;—of scholars taught and patients treated;—the number of ploughs and cows belonging to the Ryuts;—the total value realized to them by their various crops;—the number of unfortunates who were in the hands of the Muhájun, and the number released,—together with the rates of increase and decrease of population for the year. Such a table might indicate a noble subject for emulation, worthy the spirit—and such a



spirit I see around me here—of those who, rightly proud of what they have *received*—might have far more cause for pride in what they have *given*. And then,—I should like to be an Emperor, to present a jewelled medal to the most successful competitor!

Now,—having been led into an epistle three times longer than ever I intended it should have been, and, I fear, quite exhausted your patience, I shall reserve what I have next to tell you about for another Letter.



A BENGALKE ANCHOR.



BAHAR INDIGO.

## LETTER V.

*Mulsooth, February 27th.*

THE plant from which Indigo is obtained is indigenous to India. It is grown all over the Bengal Presidency, and North-West provinces,—in a portion of Madras, and to some small extent in Sindh, where, as well as in Burmah and Assam, the dye (which is said to have been used in the East from the earliest ages) is roughly manufactured in trifling quantities by the natives.

Fifty years ago, before European skill and enterprise existed to any extent, the natives about Jessore and Kishnaghur, in Bengal, were in the habit of obtaining the dye in a very rough manner, and bringing the fecula which was, of course, of the commonest kind, in small earthen vessels, and offering it for sale. It is universally admitted that the improvement in the quality of Bengal Indigo, which has enabled it to command so extensive and nearly exclusive a sale, is entirely to be attributed to British skill and capital. Bengal is reported to supply almost the whole consumption of England, and in addition, a large proportion—which is said to be as much as four-fifths—of the whole world.

As to the extent of cultivation, the amount of produce for any one season can hardly furnish you with an idea. The mercantile records for a



recent year, for instance, show a return of about 3,368 tons of Indigo to have been exported from Bengal to Great Britain, France, and other places.\* Enormous as this quantity may be, it will probably not convey to you an impression of anything very remarkable; but, bearing in mind this amount, when I tell you that to produce one small cake of this valuable material, three inches and one-quarter square (when dry), and about eight and a half ounces in weight, upwards of the thirtieth part of an acre of plant is consumed, you will, perhaps, be better able to form an idea of the great extent of land over which it is cultivated.

There are two descriptions of Indigo plant. The one is termed *Dasee* (a term applied to any produce of Bengal), and the other *up-country*. The first is grown throughout the lower provinces upon lands not liable to early inundations. The "up country" upon lowlands where, consequent on their liability to inundation, it is an object to have the crop reaped four or five weeks in advance of the other; its growth being so much more rapid. The up-country plant runs up in little more than one perpendicular stem, and requires, therefore, more seed to be used in sowing, whereas the *Dasee* plant, though it does not spring by any means so quickly, grows, if the soil be good, like a shrub—covers the whole surface of the ground, and generally yields a much larger quantity of plant per acre than the up-country seed ever does. Very little of the up-country kind is used at Mulnath, where the land is high, but a small quantity is sown at Sooksâgur, where it is much lower.

In what are termed high-land Factories—not subject, therefore, to inundations—somewhat advantageous means present themselves of obtaining a large supply of seed. After the usual crop has been cut, a plough is run through the ground amongst the stubble, to loosen the soil, and give the plant fresh strength. If the weather be favourable afterwards it shoots out again luxuriantly, growing to more than half its original height. During October it again flowers, when a pod is formed, and in the month of December the plant is cut for seed.

To a high-land Factor it is of importance to obtain as much of the seed as possible in this manner, whether cultivated on his own account or on that of the Ryut, and the advantages he derives are two-fold—direct and indirect: first—in his obtaining a supply upon the genuineness of which he can depend; and secondly, in the money being expended amongst his own Ryuts. Should the original crop have been a good one, the seed-crop now to be obtained from it is said to be a very profitable one to the Ryut, between whom and the Planter there is generally an understanding that such seed should always be taken by the Factory at an average of four Roopees per maund, (75lbs.)—a price which is sometimes under the market value, and

\* 1858. The value of this exportation was about 14,764,103 Roopees. The records of the year 1857-58, embracing one half the period of the Great Revolt, show a decrease in exportation of about 337 Tons—See Bonnaud's *Commercial Annual*, 1858.

sometimes much above it. In this seed-crop, also, another advantage offers itself to the Ryut. On re-ploughing he can sow a crop of Kulace (a kind of pulse, used as food for cattle), or other such plant, *with the Indigo*, which it does not in the least degree injure. He has thus two crops growing in the same soil. Should the original crop have been unfavourable, the Ryut is not expected to cultivate the seed, as it would neither benefit himself nor the Factory. In this case, therefore, he just ploughs it up, and sows whatever crop may please him.

Independently of seed obtained in this manner, a very large quantity of plant is sown expressly for seed in the month of June. The crop is cultivated in the usual way,—reaped late in November, and the produce, if belonging to the Ryut, taken to market for sale like any other commodity. Plant thus sown, however, for seed, is extremely expensive to cultivate. It is never sown before the rains have well set in, and requires to be kept so clean and well weeded (at a season the least favourable thereto), that the expense incident to its cultivation is such that, unless the harvest be a good one, it can never repay the sower. Planters rarely, if ever, cultivate it. A crop of this kind, with many others in Bengal, is grown entirely on their own account by Ryuts that are not needy,—who can employ their spare time in attending to it, knowing it to be one that will meet with ready sale. Under such circumstances, as they have not either to pay, or be paid, for the labour of producing it, they can rest content with knowing that, whatever the result, it will be so much clear gain. It is for similar reasons that natives can obtain advantages from sowing sugar-cane, which Europeans never can hope for. The former employs his own time and that of his children, ploughers, and the hangers-on upon his family, in attending to the cultivation, which thus, costing him comparatively nothing, must in its returns yield him nearly all profit. It becomes, in short, a kind of wind-fall; whereas the European, having to pay for all this labour, might be likely to find himself a hundred roopees in pocket—and a hundred and fifty *out*! Sugar, the mulberry for silk, and pepper, are favourite crops with the natives, from the fact of a small extent of land yielding them a large return; and these things are cultivated, as I have observed, by the various dependents in a man's family. In some parts of the country, however, particularly I believe, in Jessore, partly it may be from a favourable nature of soil, Indigo intended for seed is sown by the natives, not only voluntarily but by choice, as one of the most profitable of their crops.

We will now suppose that the seed has been obtained; when after being carefully winnowed and picked by women, who are employed for that purpose, it is stowed away in the *Seed Golahs*, or store-houses,—little circular buildings formed of mat and bamboo, covered with a thick thatch conical roof, resting on a well-raised and arched foundation and floor of



brick—presenting altogether the picturesque form and appearance of an English corn-rick.



THE SEED GOLAH.

The cultivation of Indigo in the present day is conducted in two ways. The one is termed *Ryutee*, and the other *Neezabâd*. Under the first, or *Ryutee* system, the plant is cultivated by the Ryuts upon their own ground; that is, ground farmed by them from the Zumeendar, or Planter, as already explained, but on account of the latter. The other, or *Neezabâd*, which means private cultivation, is where the Planter cultivates his own land, on which he employs exclusively his own labourers. The profit and loss are thus, of course, entirely his own.

Cultivation under the *Ryutee* system is after this manner. Instead of going to the usurious Muhâjun, the Ryut receives from the Planter the requisite supply of seed to sow, for which he is charged at the uniform rate of four annas (about sixpence) for the quantity necessary to sow one biggah, one third of an acre of land. The cost to the Planter is rarely less than double, and is more frequently treble this amount,—but the charge to the Ryut is never changed.\* At the same time he receives an advance in money for the crop in expectancy. A written bond, or *sotta*, is signed by each party; a certain price being secured to the Ryut for his Indigo, and a certain quantity at least expected in return by the Planter, according to the

\* 1858. For several years since, Indigo seed has cost the Planter from eighteen to forty Rupees (the latter being its present rate) per maund, or five Rupees per Biggah of cultivation. Its present enormous price has been occasioned by the "Revolt"—the destruction of plantations, and severance of communication with the Upper Provinces, from whence so large a quantity of seed was obtained.

quantity of seed supplied and land cultivated. The results are extremely variable, and dependent, of course, in great part upon seasons. A good Ryut will not only supply a return for his advance, but, if the season be favourable, very far beyond it; and a bad one possibly will not even repay his advance. This may argue either less care in ploughing and weeding, or less means in reference to implements and ability, and sometimes dishonesty, an evil that would be frequent but for the activity of the Planter and his establishment, whose duty it is to prevent such misconduct.

In the case I have just assumed, that of the Ryut not repaying even his advances, the deficit is carried to his debit, in order that he may repay it, if possible, by his next year's cultivation. He receives his usual fresh advances, from which a certain portion only of his debt is deducted, in order to moderate its pressure, and enable him to get on, in the hope of better fortune attending him the succeeding season. But—whether fortune, or exertion, or system be at fault—of the sad adhesive tendency of debt, a melancholy illustration has been afforded me by a neighbouring Factory statement, showing a sum of bad debts from these unpaid advances alone, over a space of many years, to the extent of two Lacs of Roopees—or £20,000!

In the system, however, just described, the Ryut is saved the loss attending assistance from the Muhâjun, because by the Planter he is, of course, charged no interest whatever; but hence, also, have arisen those lamentable instances of double-dealing on the part of dishonest Ryuts which have led to those disputes and breaches of the peace, at one time so seriously extensive in Indigo districts between neighbouring Planters. The system of *advances* is, indeed, the root of that great evil which for so long a time brought the character of the British planter into such sad disrepute, by representing him in the character of a fighting marauder, or lawless border depredator; whilst, like Othello, "perplexed in the extreme," he was, I am led to believe, in most instances, only availing himself of the roughest and readiest, and, under the imperfect state of administration of the law, most effectual mode of protecting his own rights and interests—by taking the law, in short, into his own hands.

These disturbances—now so rare everywhere, and in most districts altogether abolished, frequently arose in this manner: A dishonest Ryut would receive advances from a planter for the cultivation of a certain quantity of Indigo land; when on the perfection of the plant, it was discovered that the Ryut had *taken advances from two planters for the same crop!* The cutting time came, and one of the planters obtained information as to the insecurity of his interests. He immediately appealed to the magistrate of the district, who was perhaps thirty or forty miles off; but he passed an order on the Darogah, or district police officer to proceed to the place—inquire into the matter, and do what might be necessary. It was, however, just ninety-nine chances out of a hundred that this worthy would act according to the dictates of his own convenience, and



in favour of the side which paid him the handsomest for his interference!—Or it might be that the Zumeendar, or his Naib, stepped in, offering on certain conditions of advantage to himself, to exert his influence over the Ryuts to assist in the matter. This the planter most likely refused to do, whereupon the influence thus proffered was very probably thrown into the opponent's scale, and the planter called on the police to protect his interests; but this notoriously corrupt body—that is the Darogah, or executive head thereof, having received a consideration from the opposite parties, took, of course, a very different view of the case, whereupon the planter—the one whom I have assumed to be the more independent and straight-forward of the disputants—found himself driven to the resource of sending out his own armed Chuprasees to protect his rightful property, and thereupon a collision, even with loss of life, became very far from an impossible event.

In some of these disputes, the contending planters were both Europeans, but they were more likely to occur where one was a native planter, for there were many more native planters formerly than now, and in this case there were, it may readily be supposed, greater elements of difficulty in the way of an amicable adjustment. In the present day, however, at least in the majority of districts, not only has a system of boundaries been introduced, which prevents disputes of this character, but the possession by Europeans in so large a degree of the proprietary right of soil, making the Ryuts their own tenants—renders their occurrence almost impossible.

In the Neezabâd cultivation, which I have already explained, the planter has no Ryut or intermediate agent between himself and the cultivation of the soil, on which he employs exclusively his own labourers; and hence this system is, and ever was, free from all fears of disturbance.

Having familiarised you with the two systems of cultivation, I have now to describe the manner, and this also is in two ways. First of all, as to the soil. The richer this is the better, and there should be good drainage to prevent any lodgment of water. When the soil is thus favourable Indigo may be sown in it unremittingly for three or four years—sometimes even longer. It is, however, judicious to change as soon as it can well be done, rotation of crops being essential everywhere; for although it will not appear singular that a soil should become impoverished by continuous sowing of one kind, it may appear strange that the longer land is cultivated in Bengal for any one crop, the more expensive becomes its cultivation. Somehow the weeds seem *every year to increase*. The more frequent the cultivation, particularly for any one crop, the greater the abundance of wild vegetation. The earth appears teeming with the germ of life, which only requires to be frequently exposed to the air to spring into luxuriance; and on digging a

little deeper than usual, the only result is to bring up some fresh order of jungle that people had seldom if ever seen before! In new soil, on the contrary, whence a dense jungle has but just been removed,—soil that may not have been turned up for a century, rich in strength, and full of the germ of rank vegetation, in which you might suppose that in the first instance a crop would be unable to contend with, and be choked by the quantity of weeds that would appear, the very reverse is the case. Such soil throws up scarcely any jungle, and requires very little weeding. So well is this known in various parts of Bengal, and also in Assam, where the country is very thinly peopled, that for many crops the same soil is never cultivated for more than one or, perhaps, two years. The exuberance of jungle vegetation I have just described, exists in a much less degree under a system of rotation, which seems to take up in turn certain principles in the earth that would otherwise go to the more abundant nourishment of weeds.

Of the agricultural law I have here referred to, *rotation of crops*, you are probably already aware,—and of its arising from the fact that when, after a certain time, a soil, from being exhausted of some certain principle in its nature, will no longer yield a particular produce, another, judiciously chosen, as requiring a different kind of nourishment, may advantageously be sown in it;—that there are particular crops—those called “white crops,” such as the various kinds of corn, which are “exhausting” to the soil, and others, termed “green crops,” that rather tend to “ameliorate” it. With the advantage of this rotation, however, the natives are even now only very partially acquainted,—with its principles, as a mode of fallowing the land, not at all. They know that certain soil suits particular crops, and that some plants grow well after certain others—as Rice after Chillies, or Indigo, and *vice versa*—but they know no more, and may be said to owe the systematic introduction of the practice, as far as it extends, to the European. Thus, during the intervals of Indigo growth, a crop of some kind of pulse, or oil seed, is generally sown and reaped in sufficient time to prevent interference with the Indigo, sown in April. In high land factories the planter himself probably, has a portion of his land under some oil-seed crop,—such as mustard, a seed from which an immense quantity of oil, commonly used by all natives of Bengal, both for culinary and toilet purposes, is manufactured. Generally speaking, however, *neez* (or private cultivation) is kept free from intermediate crops, whereas in Ryutec cultivation, where a change of land is not available, the Indigo plant is no sooner cut in August than the plough is in the ground again, and oil-seeds of various kinds, but chiefly mustard, are grown. In one instance, at least, another advantage attends this alternation of crops, and that is in the case of the Tobacco plant, the soil for which having necessarily been carefully cultivated and manured, is very favourable for Indigo; but by far the most marked and important advantage is found in the exchange which is almost yearly afforded between the Rice and Indigo lands, to which reference was made in my last Letter.



In the month of October there is an agricultural practice here already alluded to which, though opposed to the Levitical law, appears to be common and unobjectionable in India—that of *mixed crops*. The Ryuts frequently sow with the Indigo—sparely of course—a variety of plants, that from their nature will not overshadow or choke the young Indigo,—such as mustard, wheat, teel, kulacee, and other descriptions of pulse; just as in England rye-grass seed is sown with wheat, which, after the latter has been reaped, will in the ensuing summer afford a luxuriant crop for the cattle.

I have said that the manner of cultivation is in two ways. The first, which may be termed ordinary cultivation by aid of plough and harrow, requires at least no preliminary explanation; but the second, which is termed *Chittanee* (or scattering) is peculiar, I imagine, to India and the Nile. You are probably already aware that the Indian rivers are subject, like that of Egypt, to the most extensive inundations. So extensive, indeed, that large tracts of land upon their margins are entirely submerged. These floodings continue for probably three months, and on the receding of the waters it is found that, consequent on the vast quantities of soil brought down by the power of the stream, a deposit of soft sandy mud has taken place. This is termed a *chur*. The deposit varies in thickness, according to place, from four inches to as much as three and four feet! Here, then, is an economically formed bed, all ready for sowing. No ploughing, or raking, or other preparation is necessary. Immediately that the water has receded, and before the deposit can bear the weight of a man, the seed is strewed over its surface, and, like “bread cast upon the waters, to return after many days,” there left to germinate. Upon this kind of land not only Indigo, but various descriptions of pulse and grain, can sometimes be sown,—such as peas, khessaree, mustard, kulacee, mussooree and chinha, or millet, which latter, coming to perfection in about two months, becomes serviceable to the natives as food when rice may be scarce.

In some Factories the quantity of *Chittanee* land may amount to a third, or even to as much as one-half of the whole, and often much more. In this case the expences of the season are of course much lighter; but then the uncertainty, which is great in all cases of low-land sowing, must be much greater in this: the inundation may chance to return!—and the seed and Planter’s hopes are together, and at once, swept into the stream!

Indigo, though it have two seasons of sowing, may be said to have but one of reaping—because the end of one cutting, and beginning of the other fall so closely together as hardly to be separate; and to understand this, a word or two respecting our seasons may be necessary. The cold weather begins about November, and ends in February. The hot season then sets in, and is followed in June or July by the rains, which last till October. It is to the variable nature of this latter season, sometimes setting in early in June, and at others not until a much later date, perhaps July,

that so much of the uncertainty, risk, and trouble attending the affairs of the Planter are attributable.

In high-land Factories, the sowings take place in the spring,—that is any time after February, when there is sufficient warmth and moisture from light rain (of which we generally have a little about Christmas), to render sowing of any avail. In general, however, this operation can seldom take place before April, because the various crops,—such as wheat; barley, oats, tobacco, mustard, linseed, chillies, and others,—have first to be removed, and the earth re-cultivated.

In low-land factories, or wherever lowlands are occupied by planters, the first sowings occur in October, and have, therefore, already taken place in some few parts of Mulnath. These sowings are confined to lands which have been inundated, and after the waters have receded, retain a sufficient amount of moisture to cause vegetation, and at this period, of course the Chittānee sowings also occur. Now, whilst these latter are immediately imperative from the nature of the soil, which if not sown at once would dry up, the former are not less so from equally pressing considerations. Thus,—the spring sowings take place, as I have said, about April, and the rains and inundations set in sometimes in June or July. Seed, therefore, sown in lowland in April, would not arrive at maturity in time to be cut ere the inundations of July would, in all probability, be in and destroy them. The advantage, therefore, of a crop sown in such ground in October, albeit, little or no growth takes place in the cold weather that ensues, is *an advanced state of preparation of the plant*, which has at least taken root and gives a crop, at the commencement of the manufacturing, full



RAIN, OR RICE.

six weeks earlier than the spring-sowings, under the most favourable circumstances could possibly do; thus making large tracts of land throughout Bengal extremely valuable for the cultivation of Indigo which would otherwise, from the risk incident to the rising of the rivers in July, be of little service or importance. The same system is sometimes adopted in high lands—where the soil may be bad, and plant sown in spring would probably fail from the extreme dryness of the earth, and lateness of rain. Sown in September or October, it has the advantage of rain in those months, and thus takes root and strengthens sufficiently to resist the scorching suns of the hot weather.

The operations of the plough have at last commenced about Mulnath; not only preparatory to the cultivation of Indigo, but to the rice sowings which occur simultaneously with it. Independently of several score—nay, hundreds of minor distinc-



tions in kind, far too numerous, therefore, to name, there are two principal descriptions of rice, and they are sown at distinct periods. The first is called the *Ous Dhan*, which is sown in April, and reaped in August. The other is termed *Amun Dhan*, or the water rice, which is sown in May or June, and reaped in November. The former is a coarse kind of grain,—the latter, which requires a well-wetted soil for its cultivation, is the best. Occasionally in certain low lands, not subject to sudden inundations, these two kinds of rice may be seen sown together. In this case the channels of the water leading to such lands are shut off until the *Ous Dhan*, which ripens ere the *Amun Dhan* is even in ear, has been reaped.

A very singular and interesting fact, strongly illustrative of the care and goodness of Providence, is connected with this description of rice—the *Amun Dhan*—in the remarkable and happy property it possesses, of rising in growth, during the inundations, to almost an unlimited height; until, in short, the water ceases to increase about it. Whilst the inundation continues to flow in upon it with any moderate rapidity, the rice keeps pace with it in growth, so as ever to *keep the ear above water*; whereas, in the absence of inundation the plant retains the usual and moderate height of about three feet. Mr. F— here assures me that he has known it during heavy inundations rise seven and eight feet in height; and in the Backergunge district where this description of rice is much cultivated, he has heard of its reaching the enormous elevation of twenty feet! But, beyond even this, I have the authority of another friend, Mr. M—, of Loknathpore, for the fact of its having attained the almost incredible length of *thirty-five feet*! I say “length” because in flowing or disturbed water the stalk would *incline*, and thus possibly require many more feet in length than the mere depth of water would indicate. In short, whilst, as I have said, the flow of water is neither too sudden, nor too rapid, there really appears no limit to the power of growth in this wonderful and valuable species of rice.

Not only are there two descriptions of this important grain, but two states or preparations of it brought to market. The first, which is called “*Arwur*,” is the rice threshed, or perhaps, I should say husked, in its natural state, as you see it in England, the grain being small and white; and according to the native doctor here, is the most nourishing. The other, or “*Bhoonjwur*,” is the rice after it has been par-boiled, and thus has not only swollen, and acquired a dark tint, and, on being cooked, a disagreeable odour, but has lost a portion of its nutritious property, and is, therefore, the least nourishing. The Doctor, as one homely evidence hereof, declares that a native having taken a meal on *Arwur* rice, will not hunger again within the same time that he would do had he fed upon *Bhoonjwur*. The process of par-boiling is effected by steeping the paddy over night—straining off the water in the morning, when the grain is found swollen and the husk cracked, and heating it in earthen vessels to some requisite degree over a fire. The object of this operation is to facilitate that of husking (the work of threshing,

or treading out, having only separated the paddy from the ear), and also to save the waste in broken grain and rice dust occasioned by husking the grain in its dry state. Hence, this description of rice is very considerably cheaper, and in almost exclusive use by the poorer natives; whilst the Arwur which is used by Europeans, and hence commonly known in the City as "Table Rice," is sold at nearly double the cost.\*

The operations of husbandry in India, you may suppose, retain all the simplicity of primitive times, as recorded in our Scriptures. The oxen tread out both the corn and the rice, and two women are here seen husking



THE DHENKEE, OR RICE-HUSKING MILL.

the latter under a *Dhenkee* as elsewhere they may be seen "grinding at the mill,"—precisely as we are left to picture them in the days of the Jewish Patriarchs three thousand years ago. The "*Dhenkee*" I have mentioned is simply a long wooden beam, working on a pivot near its lower end, on which the women tread with one foot in order to raise the longer

and heavier lever, having at the upper extremity a short perpendicular bar, or pestle, under which, within a cup, hollowed out of wood, the grain is pushed and beaten. The same instrument is used for pounding bricks into soorkee, an Indian substitute for gravel, and for sand, when that material is not available, in the preparation of mortar.

\* A reference respecting some question connected with this matter to an intelligent native, elicited the following information upon the subject. Under obvious temptation it is presented in its integrity—*verbatim et literatim*:—

"There are two operations either of which Paddies generally undergo before rice is extracted from them, the one exposing them to heat only, and the other subjecting them to be boiled in addition. The rice which is made by the first operation is called Arwa, and is of a much whiter and cleaner tint, while that prepared by the second, known as Boonjar, takes a color comparatively dark. If from equal quantities of Paddy of the same pattern, Arwa and Boonjar rice be respectively prepared, the weight of Arwa produced, must fall short to Boonjar, as the latter is swollen and retains its inherent filth through boiling operation. Hence arises the distinction of prices between the rices alluded to. The object of making Boonjar seems certainly to keep the rice unbroken and entire, and by allowing parts of its essence to evaporate, administer it lightness and susceptibility of quick digestion.

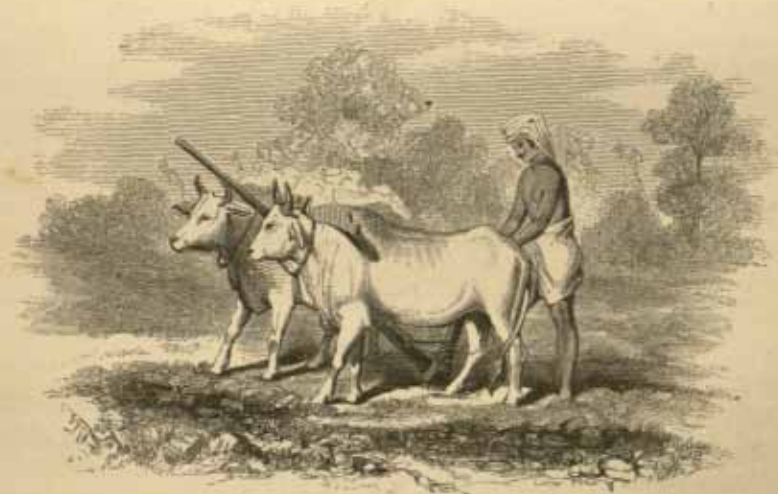
Arwa is the rice in its natural state, and is of a warmer ture; it is not much used in Bengal, except by those who feed but once a day. The ancient law givers of India while dooming its wretched widows daily to one meal, prescribed purposely Arwa as their food, and besides this, on the eleventh day of every moon, they must strictly fast and not even drink a drop of water. Every sort of Paddy without reference to Ous or Amun are productive both of Boonjar and Arwa, but Arwa prepared from Amun Dhan is much superior in purity, and is much held in estimation by the natives."



Indian ploughing, also, of the present day, despite its connection with European husbandry, exhibits little or no improvement, I understand, upon that of fifty years ago. Not an atom of European skill, or greater adaptation of means to ends, appears to have been introduced into Indian agriculture. There is the same rough simplicity of construction in its implements now, I am led to believe, which existed when Warren Hastings experimentalised on coffee at Sooksâgur, and long ages before it. The Bengalee Plough, as the sketches will show you, is one of the simplest pieces of rusticity you can imagine. The nicety of construction—the complicated parts—the well considered and mathematically determined angles and surfaces—centres of resistance and centres of action, of an English plough, are almost independently set at naught. There is, in short, nothing but a square-pointed wooden *coulter*, shod with iron, that plays the part also of *share*, the upper part of which, at an angle of about thirty-five degrees, serves for *stilt*, with a short handle at the end of it, by which the ploughman guides and depresses the instrument.



BENGALÉE PLOUGH.



PLOUGHING.

Through the centre of the thicker portion, where the stilt and coulter may be said to unite, a straight beam passes, to the end of which the clumsy

yoke is attached, and the whole, when in use, is braced together by ropes tied from the stilt to the yoke. Bullocks are of course used for its draught, between which the ploughman seems alternately to use his hands in guiding the plough by its one handle, and his cattle by their tails. Here—as the upper part of the coulter presents a surface little more than three inches in breadth, offering little resistance to the sod, and there is, in short, no really scientific principle brought into play to give the instrument any one self-guiding or self-sustaining action—the labour of tilling may be said to be divided between the bullocks and the man, who has to throw in his weight and strength in order to keep the plough in the earth, over some obstinate sods of which, notwithstanding, it will be seen every now and then to skip and hop, as though, like many plodding easy-going beings of human kind, it thought obstacles were much better avoided than contended with. As for furrow it is seldom more than three or four inches in depth. The earth, in short, is in many places little more than scratched! Yet, with this rude and apparently most inefficient instrument is nearly the whole surface of the vast plains of India tilled; and, indebted under a beneficent Creator to its generous and prolific soil, are luxuriant crops of every kind abundantly reared and reaped by its uneducated inhabitants.



HARROWING.

Little help, indeed, does our Indian soil receive from the husbandman: for the principal and more extensive cultivations, none at all. For a few of the minor and limited crops, such as Tobacco, the ground is manured; and possibly a small portion of land near a Factory may partially receive a like advantage for Indigo. When the soil has become weakened it is simply allowed to lie fallow, and cattle are probably turned into it to graze; after which perhaps it may yield good thatching-grass before being again brought under cultivation for the regular crops. Sometimes the land lies



fallow from mere want of means to cultivate it; and here and there large patches of poor soil are found which no means are taken to improve, and will therefore only produce those crops requiring the least possible nourishment from the soil—such as Teel—Urhur—and other green produce.

The ground is now ploughed, and ready for the next operation; and if you think an Indian plough a rustic affair, what think you of an Indian harrow?—an old bamboo ladder—pulled over the ploughed ground by three or four bullocks abreast, a couple of ploughmen standing on the ladder—holding on, driving and guiding the machine by the bullocks' tails!—Can simplicity go further?—And when at eve—

“The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,—”

he shoulders his light plough and harrow together, as they were but a mattock and a spade!

The agricultural bullocks are fed principally on the uncultivated lands in the neighbourhood of the village; but eternal are the complaints, albeit frequent the fines inflicted on the owners of cattle trespassing amongst the Indigo, and destroying its valuable leaves. Bullocks used for the transport of goods from one market to another are fed principally upon *khoel*, or oil-cakes and chopped straw, of which they are very fond, and, beyond this, whatever grass they can manage to pick up in their way. Were I in the City, where cruelty to the poor over-worked bullocks is a crying sin and shame, I should assuredly here require a vent for my indignation; but I am happy to say that the discredit and the cruelty of mutilated tails and galled humps appear to be confined to the town,—for I, at least, have observed nothing of the kind to disfigure rural life here, or detract from the pleasure of its contemplation.



JUNDA THREE GOATS.



ENTRANCE TO MULNATH VILLAGE.

## LETTER VI.

*Mulnath, April 15th.*

My last described the agricultural doings here as having brought the ground into a state of preparation for seed, and that is as much as generally takes place in the month of February. Should rain chance to fall sufficiently early, the spring-sowings may commence in March, in which event the Planter considers himself fortunate. Such sowings are generally the best, because the plant, by being in the ground early, attains a sufficient degree of strength before the hot weather sets in to bear it better than a younger plant could do; but, as a general rule, there is seldom reason to look for any extensive sowings before April. That time has arrived, and the regular spring-sowings have for several days been in active operation around Mulnath. Of these operations but little description is required. The seed is sown by the simple process of hand-strewing,—the clod-breaking harrow is again passed over the ground, and the work is done.

Besides those of Indigo and Rice, the sowings of the present month include a variety of other produce, as Hemp, of which there are three descriptions,—Pepper, Turmeric, Mân Kuchoo, and Gooroo Kuchoo, species of the Egyptian Arum,—Sweet Potato—Ginger, and Sugar-cane—an article but little cultivated by the people, consequent on the trouble and expense it



occasions, and the little encouragement offered, at least in the districts about here, for its production.

As generally anticipated, about this period there has been a little rain, and, in consequence, a rapid change has come over the whole surface of the country. So rapid, indeed, are the operations of nature in this fertile soil, that within about forty-eight hours the Indigo germinates, and shews itself above the ground, and in six or seven days the whole fields are covered with plant,—probably half an inch high. From a sterile, burnt-up appearance, therefore, the country around is now transformed into a sheet of beautiful cultivation springing from the ground; the dark hue of the Indigo beautifully relieved by the delicate light green of the Rice fields. Indeed, the whole place is brightening into life and verdure, and despite the fast-increasing power of the sun, every object around is acquiring a more interesting aspect. Amongst them, let me not forget the village of Mulnath, which I have not hitherto named—almost hidden from view by jungle, thickset hedges, and trees. Here the Factory servants of the humble kind have their residences,—of which I can only say that, like all native dwellings, they are more conducive to the picturesque of a drawing, than to the comfort of their inhabitants. Principally formed of mud, plastered over a frame work of bamboo, with one narrow door-way, and a hole of probably a foot square for a window, and a mud floor, what comfort can there exist within?

No furniture?—you inquire. Indeed, were I to say *none*, I should be but little from the truth,—for I believe that in ninety-nine out of one hundred cases, the following would be found an inventory of the household goods and chattels of a Bengalee of the humble, if I may not include the middling—classes :—

One Charpâce, or Bedstead.—Two Wooden Seats.—One Common Mat.

Two or three Brass Lotahs or small water vessels.—Two Cooking Hârees, or pans.

One large Brass Plate, or dish.—One Kherâg or Lamp ;

To which may be added a Choolha, or earthen fire vessel, in which to cook the rice, and two or three Khoolsees or water vessels :—the collective value of which might amount to about Four Roopees, or eight shillings !

Happily for the poor of Bengal, so few are their wants, and so cheap their food,\* that when considering the “pale chilling want” of Europe, where the real pangs of poverty in extremity of climate, are alone felt in their full horrors, its privations here are, in comparison, almost non-existent in the balance. But truly, whatever their means may be, the Bengalee appear to have little idea of comfort in common with our own; and it is perhaps the more remarkable, after being so long associated with Europeans (I speak more particularly of those in the city), that they should have picked up so few notions of personal comfort or convenience around them

\* 1858. Thanks to the “Revolt”—this happy state of things has been sadly changed. Food is now *double* its former price, and the pressure upon the people, in cities and towns, is severe.

in shape of domestic furniture or utensils of the humblest character; not indeed requiring the expenditure of money so much as the application of a little ingenuity, a trifle of personal exertion, and a modicum of taste. It is certain, however, after all, that these things are matters of education, and thus, perhaps, "example" is not always better than "precept." They are at least dependent on each other. Indian notions of comfort lie *without* not *within* doors. They are connected with an increase of the plot of ground or plantation, or the number of cattle attached to it: and when by industry or thrift an addition is made to worldly store, the only alteration it creates within doors is probably the addition of a ponderous looking wooden treasure box, in which to store whatever little increase of means may have accumulated, together with the jewels of the women—sundry account-books, and possibly a few brass vessels, which are thought sufficiently valuable to tempt cupidity.



MARKET PLACE.

Attached, or near to the village and the river side, is the little market-place, where, upon every Wednesday and Saturday, a *Haut* or provision and general market, is held for the benefit of the poor people around.

The residences of the higher servants of the Factory, such as the Gomastah, Sircars, or writers, and others—all of whom generally have a bevy of relatives, dependants and assistants about them—are found very prettily situated near to the house at one side of the avenue skirting the garden grounds, where lofty fir-trees, the babool, and the wide spreading banyan give beauty and shelter to the spot.





RESIDENCES OF HEAD SERVANTS.

April 30th.

As every age has its hero—every country its philosopher, poet, or other conspicuous person, so every village would appear to have its “character.” Mulnath, amongst others, has its “Fool.” Like most of the dramatic poet’s fools, however, he of Mulnath—though he may make no outward display of them—appears to have a portion of his wits, at least, about him. He keeps them, probably, as a wise man does his purse, hid in a safe pocket till necessity demands its use. Our friend here without his wits contrives to keep himself in food and lodging, which is what many people elsewhere, with all their wits about them, have a great difficulty in doing. He is a Moosulmân, and continually ejaculating with pious vehemence the Mohummudan declaration of—*La Ellah il-lil Ullah, Mohummud-ur-Russool Ullah!*—which he concludes with an exclamation of *Mabood!*—*Mabood!* [the Deity], repeated many times over. Walk which way we may, Mr. F—— and I generally find this poor fellow at our heels, his approach being invariably announced by the premonitory exclamation of *Ullah Mabood! Mabood!*—when, coming up and stopping short, he makes a profound and respectful sulâm, bending his body nearly to the ground, and rising with closed hands and inclined head, stands the very picture of resignation and humility, until a word from my host encourages him to speak—to pray—to praise—to bless,

and to beg by turns. He wants a *durgah* (literally a place of sitting or resting)—“where he can pray to God, and bless the sahib!”—“I want no wife—I want no wealth—I want only a *durgah*, where I can worship God, and pray for master!—*Ullah Mabood!*”—and then, as though transfixed by a paralytic stroke, he recloses his hands, and falls into his original attitude of immovable and profound humility.

This morning, whilst out sketching, the sound of *Ullah Mabood!* had scarcely struck upon my ear when he was at my side, and making his customary deep *sulâm*, he said—“Child, I am in great trouble,—I cannot get bread!”—“Indeed! (said I) can you not work?”—“No! (he replied, instantly assuming an air and tone of great gaiety, as though rejoicing at his ignorance),—No, I cannot do that;—all the work that I know is—(laying down his staff, and elevating his voice to the usual exclamatory pitch)—*La Ellah il-lil Ullah, Mohummud-ur-Russool Ullah!*—There! that’s the work that I know—that’s all!—*La Ellah il-lil Ullah, Mohummud-ur-Russool Ullah!*” \*—ending as usual with the exclamatory cry of *Mabood!* A trifle—which I afterwards found he showed to everybody as he went—no bad evidence it may be thought of his insanity—sent him on his way rejoicing.

The history of this poor man would appear to be a sad comment on the state of domestic morality—or immorality, which is declared to exist more than would be supposed probable amongst the lower orders of India. He is said to have been poisoned by his unfaithful wife; who, anxious to be ridded of his authority, administered, not the “leprous distilment of the juice of henbane,” but of the *Dhutoora*, or Thorn Apple, which, failing to “effect her more deadly purpose,” drove the poor fellow into raving madness, and finally left him permanently bereft of his reason. He has of late, however, greatly improved. At one period he was so violent and dangerous, as to require to be hand-cuffed, but he has so far recovered as to have become harmless and good humoured—roaming about the neighbourhood in the character of a religious mendicant, and exciting alike the charity of the Hindoo, and the pious contributions of “the Faithful.”



MOORILLA, THE URGANE MENDICANT.

Beyond what I have already told you, the present month of April, I find, offers nothing that can particularly interest you in Mofussul, or Planter’s life and doings;—but I may mention that on the 12th of this month the Bengalee year begins, and as all accounts and agreements run in accordance with the Bengalee year, its commencement sometimes brings with it a variety of

\* There is no Supreme Being (or God) but God; and Mohummud is His Prophet.



cares and anxieties to the Planter connected with *Ezarahs*, or farms held from Zumeendars, the renewal of which from year to year often causes much trouble and expense.

The month of May that follows, is generally one only of progression of the crops,—and burning heat, when the Planter's rides, though perhaps less frequent, are more trying. He rises and starts earlier; and if detained late abroad, only rides the harder to get in again from the sun; whilst from the numerous descriptions of *sola topee*, or pith hats, which the ingenuity or whims of Mofussul folk have invented as a protection from the terrible solar beams, he selects the thickest and largest he can find, or adds a curtain behind as a further protection to the neck. So essential and so valuable are these articles, and so characteristic of Mofussul life—and so odd withal in their appearance that they merit not only a passing word, but an illustration also.

Sola hats, I should premise, are made of the pith of a marshy plant, the *Phool Sola*, or light sponge wood, a material which from its lightness permitting the hats to be full half an inch in thickness, is admirably suited for the purpose. For distinction sake, I must needs confer upon them such names as their shapes may suggest. The first, or *Farmer's Hat*, since the introduction of the immortal "Napier Topee," seems to have been regarded as old fashioned—ill-fitting, and uncomfortable, and is hence discarded. The next,



THE FARMER'S HAT.

or *Great Mushroom Topee*, is frequently about a foot and a half across the base, and (like several others of this class) is a hat with a double roof, with holes pierced through the upper part of the inner one to admit the air. No. 3, or *Lesser Mushroom Topee*, differs in nothing from the *Greater*



THE GREAT MUSHROOM TOPEE.



LESSER MUSHROOM TOPEE.

but in being flatter and smaller. Whilst these are remarkable for their eccentricity of form, the next, or No. 4, for which I lack a name, can be distinguished for nothing but its unmitigated tastelessness

and vulgarity. No. 5, or *the Barn*, is nothing more than the Farmer's hat, pierced at the top, and covered with a mushroom roof; whilst No. 6, or *the Toadstool*,



THE DULL TOPEE.



THE BARN TOPEE.

is a monstrosity that sets comment and good taste alike at defiance!—but it is a capital protection nevertheless. All these are of the old school. At the head of the modern and more approved description stands the celebrated "*Napier*

*Topee*,"—introduced, I believe, by our late gallant Commander-in-Chief Sir Charles Napier. The good taste, convenient shape and proportions that distinguish this cap, which is made of grey or drab felt, and has the elegant form, indeed, of the helmet, have commended it to the



THE TOADSTOOL TOPEE.



THE NAPIER TOPCE.

patronage of all. It is used by officers in the army (to whom it must be invaluable), and private individuals. It has lately been improved by the addition of an opening for ventilation at the upper part, sometimes so placed as to represent the crest, and thus to increase its helmet-like appearance, whilst a white or blue muslin scarf, or turban, is wound around the lower part of it. The *Planter's "Napier,"* which is made of *Sola*, and covered, as all the rest are, with white linen, is less elegant, but more effectual. The two peaks are more projective; and to the hinder part, in place of the ends of a scarf, as in the original "Napier" just seen, there is attached a curtain to protect that part of the human frame—the nape of the neck, or upper part of the spine, which is said to be more susceptible than even the head itself to injury from the sun. No. 9, or the *Jockey*, is a further



THE JOCKEY TOPCE.

modification of the "Napier," and a further and ludicrous departure from its elegance of form. To these that belong (the first "Napier" excepted) almost exclusively to the *Mofussil*, may be added the common *Military* or *Navy Undress Cap*, with a loose white cover, which being wadded with cotton, and extending down the nape of the neck, though not equal in efficiency to the others for long exposure, is yet a very serviceable, neat, and comfortable covering, which has been extensively introduced into the army. There is another description of Topce, worn by gentlemen in the City and elsewhere, in their morning or business perigrinations,—a felt "wide awake," around which a white "pugree," or muslin band, is thickly wound, a fold of it thrown over the upper part, and the end falling down over the back of the neck,—the whole forming a sort of compromise between that most unmeaning and tasteless article of European costume, a black hat, and an Oriental turban.



MILITARY UNDRESS TOPCE.



THE PLANTER'S TOPCE.



WIDE-AWAKE TOPCE.

Whilst the Planter obtains protection from the dreaded sun in the manner here described, suited to his itinerant and active habits, the labouring peasant seeks a like security,—if not under his palm-leaf *chatta*, or umbrella,—beneath the ample folds of a cloth wrapped about the head, surmounted, it may be, by a broad wicker-work *Toka*, such as I have shewn you on the head of the Ploughman; or more leisurely watches his cultivation from beneath the roof of his *koorea*, or straw hovel, erected for that purpose in the midst of his plantation.





THE "MIRZAPORE" RIVER STEAMER.

## LETTER VII.

*Mulnath July 11th.*

MOUNTED on the deck of that modern Pegasus—a steamer—a pleasant trip on board the "Mirzapore," the largest of our Indian river boats, brought me upon my present visit into the Mofussul in six hours to Sooksagur, instead of having it prolonged to a couple of days' tedious journey in the tardy budgerow. The superior elevation of a steamer, also, towering over all the native craft,—through fleets of which, unwieldy, and unmanageable as they are, spread over the whole breadth of the river, nothing but much skill, care, and patience, on the part of the commander, could avoid running a dozen of them down—afforded a view of the banks and country generally which I never before enjoyed.

On reaching those parts of the country where cultivation would be seen, the effects of the late excessive rains were distressingly apparent. At a delta formed by the junction of two branches of the river near Trebany, or Bânsberia, the locality of the Mission School, established there in the year 1844,\* the land in every direction appeared inundated, and nothing but a

\* This school was established by the Rev. Dr. Duff, and by a singular course of circumstances, on the very premises engaged by the members of the Bramha Shabha, for the propagation of Vedantism! The means of the association falling off, an appeal to the orthodox Hindoos was made for support, in which the danger of missionary efforts was urged as strong ground for immediate help. By an amusing

few patches of green plant, rice and mustard, here and there, with a few huts, near which the poor people, like mice on a floating log, were congregated in groups, served to mark any distinction between the two streams. The water almost everywhere was on a level with the bank, which in the dry season will be seen to over-top it by several feet—in some places as many as twelve. Thus, upon arriving at Sooksâgur, the place, but for the house, would have been indistinguishable, for the ghât or landing, up which I have hitherto been accustomed to clamber full seven and eight feet, was now below the edge of the boat from which I stepped ashore. You may hence gather some idea of the rise of our Indian rivers.

Arrived at the house, I learnt that riding was out of the question, and that arrangements had been made for my travelling by palkee. The country was flooded in all directions, and the destruction of Indigo plant throughout the whole Sooksâgur plantation had been ruinous. The land, as I before stated, is all low,—the plant, consequently, near the river, entirely submerged, and that which, being more inland, has escaped total destruction, will be so saturated, stunted, and washed, as to yield the very poorest amount of colouring matter. The dejected Gomasta's account of the disasters of the season, were only equalled in dolorous tone by that of the Khidmutgar when detailing the pains he had so fruitlessly been at in daily preparation, three times repeated, of that hospitality of which I had been prevented the earlier enjoyment.

As you are already familiar with our Indian conveyance, the *palkee*, or Palankeen, I need say nothing more of the one in which I was now to complete my journey, than that it was *private*—which all palkees in the Mofussul, where there is no constant demand for its use, generally speaking, must be. The bearers, therefore, (who are a caste of Hindoos termed Doolé), having nothing of that uniformity either in practice or association which characterises the City "regulars," exhibit, of course, all that motley appearance which rustic "irregulars,"—though bearers by caste, yet spending far more of their time in tilling the ground than carrying palkees—may be expected to present. Young and old, however, fat and lean, tall and short, or in whatsoever way diversified, there is one uniform characteristic amongst these poor people, which the depressing influences of city life (despite its greater emoluments), and its conventional stiffness seem, somehow, to destroy,—*cheerfulness*,—that buoyancy of spirit which appears to make the burthen light, and to sweeten the cup of toil.

Of this unrestraining simplicity I do not forget an amusing example. Riding out early one morning with Mr. F—— on the Bongong Road, we met a dâk palkee. The morning had scarcely broke, and the palkee

piece of simplicity the draft of this appeal was actually handed to Dr. Duff, by one of those who had prepared it, for the favour of correction!—Chivalry itself could not demand such "purveying of a lance" to an enemy as this; and the information thus obtained subsequently led to the purchase of the premises for that mission against which they had been intended as a stronghold and battery.



doors were closed. With natural curiosity to know who might be the traveller so near to Mulnath, we inquired in an under tone, from one of the after runners, who it was.—“It’s a Mem, sir—(loudly bellowed the rustic,—innocently making as light of the lady’s feelings as of his own sorrows and burthen, which, nevertheless, he intended to indicate)—a very fat Mem!”—We were not sorry to let our horses put us quickly out of sight and hearing of the cavalcade.

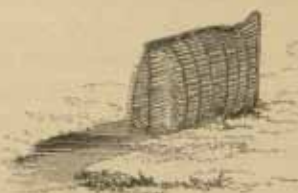
Of such as these, then, a motley group of nineteen were gathered together at seven the next morning—sixteen of whom, or four sets, were to carry the palkee, and the remaining three, as “banghy bearers,” my traps,—one of the three being for relief. The term “banghy” refers to the mode in which the burthen is carried; which is by its division into two parts—slung at the two ends of a half or split bamboo, carried across the shoulder. From the severe pressure of this bamboo, or perhaps more extensively from the poles of the palkee, you will see many of these poor fellows with lumps of hard or muscular flesh formed upon the shoulders full two inches in height! From better, or more gradual training, as I take it, greater regularity in practice, and infinitely more moderate exertion at one time, this is very seldom seen amongst the bearers of Calcutta.

Now the difference between the private dāk, and the public or Government dāk is, that the latter is managed by relays of eight fresh bearers at every eighth mile on the ride, whereas with the former, which are of course confined to some—I will not say moderate, but *possible* distance—not absolutely demanding a camel—a certain number of men perform the whole journey—which, in the present instance, as I have already had occasion to mention, was precisely twenty-two miles. This will strike you with wonder, no doubt,—for whether we regard their appearance—their food and habits, or their climate, it is not only marvellous but incomprehensible, how a set of men so scant and poor in form—as many of them are,—so apparently ill adapted for great exertion, should be capable of such laborious endurance. This capability, however, despite its being based, as no doubt it is, on that enduring spring “Temperance”—does not, I fear, include impunity to frame and constitution. The blessings of railways “that are to be,” therefore, will not extend to commerce and convenience only, but to humanity.

Hastily passing round the Kulyán, or hookah, a few puffs upon which seemed as eagerly sought and valued as a ‘glass of grog’ or a pint of porter to an English labourer ere entering on his task, the bearers now shouldered the palkee; but to a citizen newly escaped from bricks and mortar, and noisy sounds, into the pure and silent air and green fields of the country, how was it possible to “hold the shade?” I had not walked above a mile, however, ere a broad pond of water, knee deep, drove me to the palkee, nor was I again, until within a few miles of Mulnath, able to quit it. Every five hundred yards of the road was interrupted by deep pools and

running streams. In the more open parts, "flooded immense," the country presented nothing but a succession of broad sheets of deep water, many so broad and long as to be easily mistakable for rivers, from which, indeed, nothing but occasional islets—patches of the tall hemp, or more beautiful green of the water rice plant, peeping above the flood, could well distinguish them. Had the palkee been a small flat-bottomed boat, with a pole at either end, the labour of the men could frequently have been economized. In many directions there appeared more water than land.

In the villages, however, and wherever else a little more than ordinary elevation of ground had preserved its features above water, the usual characteristics of Indian country life once more met the eye.—The mud hut, always looking as though planted with nice eye and judgment by some master artist, amidst the most becoming foliage in that *precise* position and direction most conducive to the picturesque! The tethered or timid cows at the gate or rustic out-house, with their astonished calves, looking for the first time in their lives, possibly, upon a white biped: and the black goat that cares not for the colour of anybody or anything, save the green grass he so industriously crops. The men *sulâm*,—the women, standing still, modestly turn their backs, or sidelong, with half covered, half averted face, glance at the passing 'Sahib; the little children run out, or stand and stare, or scamper back into their huts to view at a safer distance and draw attention to the novel sight. At every turn, wherever a stream of water could be intercepted, or its course, by damming up, be directed through a narrow channel, men and boys having planted at the entrances their *Ghonnees*, or basket-ware traps, some of them (being various in shape) looking far more like neatly constructed bird-cages than fishing-nets—were patiently watching for their tiny prey—the diminutive prawns and various descriptions of minute fish common to the rivers which, overflowing their banks, have spread their unresisting little inhabitants in vast numbers and a thousand streams, over the face of the country.\* On the opposite margins the graceful paddy bird, disturbed from a similar occupation, erects its long white neck,—then stooping, springs aloft, or skims over the surface of the water to some more secure spot; whilst the sharp whistle of a thousand swallows suddenly darting from the ground—the low squeal of the paddy bird, as he skims over the lake, and the coo of the wild dove are the only sounds that break upon the stillness of the air.



A GHONNEE, OR FISH TRAP.

\* Where the river, bursting its "bund" or embankment, has freshly broken in, I have seen men, without the aid of any other trap than the edge of their cloth, or a handkerchief, spread across such a stream, in less than thirty seconds capture as many small fish as would fill a half-pint measure. The size of these fish varied from three-quarters of an inch to about two inches in length.



For full ten miles of the journey there was no abatement of water, which in some places had so obliterated all traces of the usual road, that the bearers were, now and again, obliged to stop, whilst one or two with their long sticks, searched a-head for the path, and sounded the depth of water, frequently knee-deep, ere venturing to cross.

On approaching Mulnath, which we did by two o'clock in the afternoon (no bad travelling, you will acknowledge, considering all things), sad evidence everywhere presented itself, even yet, of the mischief done by the late hurricane. Trees blown down, or mutilated—shorn of their luxuriant proportions, and huts destroyed or unroofed in all directions. Would that the mischief of the gale had ended there;—but, alas! sixty poor people, principally old men and women, Ryuts and villagers living on and attached to the concern,—too infirm to be abroad or active in the “pitiless storm,” and too weak to resist or to bear violence, perished under the falling huts and mud walls that were levelled by its fury!

Two months have now elapsed since this sad catastrophe, and the country has in some degree recovered its appearance, and the poor people their cheerfulness. There is a thinning of foliage, certainly—an irrecoverable injury to many of the finest trees, and there is an opening out of the view in directions never before seen, which, if time do not soon mend, the eye will quickly become accustomed to. Beyond this, Mulnath has suffered little real injury to its charms. There is enough of wood to shelter the cattle and the beautiful deer that browse in the park,—enough of foliage to house the blithe birds that are singing and chirruping from morning till evening,—enough of green herbage to relieve the murkiest sky,—no more of water than contributes to the landscape beauty, at least, and there is that wholesome serenity of air that like “the silence of a Sabbath day—”

“So deep and pure, profound and calm,  
So redolent of Heavenly balm,  
So lulling to the weary breast,  
So like a thing of perfect rest,  
Missioned the brow of care to smoothe,  
Missioned the pang of grief to soothe,—” \*

does indeed minister in no small degree to the relief, disburdening, and enjoyment of the mind.

I would that this selfish view of the matter, however, were the only one that could be taken; but, unhappily, there is one feature in the landscape, as you will already have gathered, which, however pretty it may look in pictures,—this world of water—is to the planter and my host, a world of woe! Around the immediate neighbourhood of Mulnath, where the land is high, injury to the Indigo plant has been comparatively trifling, but in the out factories, wherever the land is low, as at Sookságur, and the inundations heavy, the mischief has been extreme. Fortunately for the

\* “Sabbath Silence.” “Madonna Pia, and other Poems,” by Jas. Gregor Grant.

poor in this neighbourhood, their rice (the Ous-Dhan), which has now attained nearly its full growth and strength, promises to spare them any immediate participation in the sorrows of the season—for, although, unlike the Amun-Dhan, it will not bear standing in water, it will yet, unless the ear be ripe, put up with a pretty good soaking from rain without injury.

We have now arrived at the manufacturing season, so that I find all activity at the Factory; and as this is an important and interesting business, I shall let it form the subject of a distinct Letter. But first, a few words as to what has taken place since my last visit here. During the month of June there is generally little to mark in the affairs of the Planter. The rains, however, usually set in, which, of course, produce many changes in the features of the country, and cause a rapid development of the plant, but

unless the rain has fallen in any extreme degree, or the inundations have commenced, the time is usually nothing more than one of progression of the crops, both Indigo and Rice. But there is another crop, belonging to the Ryuts, which has now arrived at maturity, and is in course of manufacture. This is *Hemp*, the appearance of which adds a lovely feature to the landscape.

There are three descriptions of this plant. The first and best, which is called *Sun*, or *Sóon*, is sown in June,—arrives at maturity in about forty-five days, and during that time, so rapid is its growth, attains the height of eight and some-



THE SUN HEMP.

times nine feet, when its brilliant yellow flowers, which grow in spires upon every stem, enrich the landscape with the appearance of a field of waving gold.



THE KOOSTA HEMP.



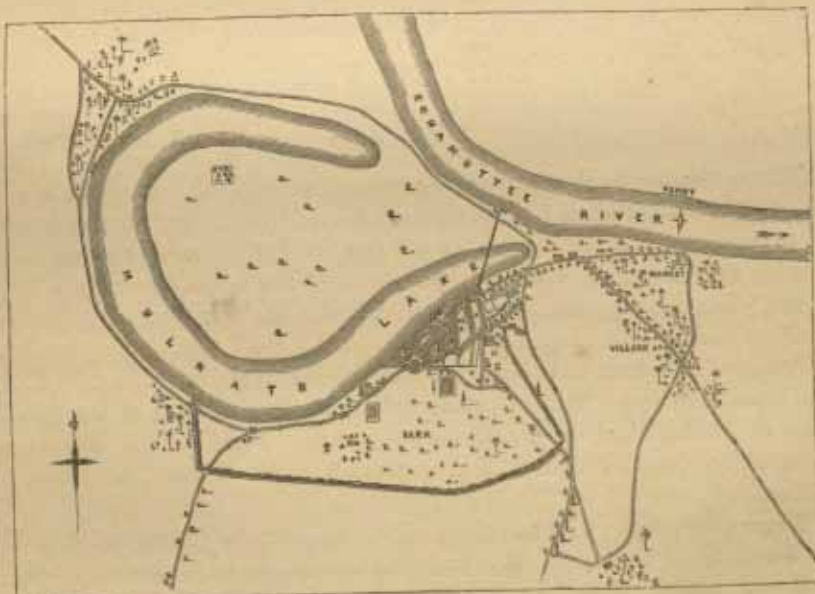
THE MESTA HEMP.

In order to obtain the fibre, or hemp, which lies in the outer covering of the stem, the plant is steeped in the river for two days and a half and beaten. The second description of hemp is called *Koosta*,—bears the same kind of flower, and requires five or six days steeping ere it can be manufactured. The third kind, or *Mesta*, is distinguished by a very pretty star-shaped leaf. Like the *Koosta*, it is an inferior kind of hemp, and also requires five or six days steeping, ere preparation. The better description of hemp, or *Sun*, is said to



yield the cultivator about five roopees the biggah—or say thirty shillings per acre. Generally speaking, however, the people about here cultivate no more of this plant than they require for their own purposes, and themselves roughly manufacture their line and rope by hand.

Before closing, I must tell you that the sanctity and repose of the beautiful lake, skirting the house, has been invaded! Swollen to an unprecedented degree by the late rains and inundations, its waters have united themselves with the river by a creek sufficiently broad to admit a boat, and a brute of an Alligator, availing himself of the opportunity, has walked in—taken possession—and now roams the lake from end to end, levying black mail on fish, fowl, or whatever else edible may come within his reach! The geese, belonging to the house, that were wont to enjoy its waters in peace, have consequently been decreasing, and the servants, no longer daring to enter the lake are compelled to fetch water from its margin and to bathe upon land. Receiving sudden intelligence yesterday of the animal having come up upon the very bank of the garden, I hastened to the spot, but ere I could get rifle to shoulder, he had taken to the water, and was swimming, with nose only above the surface, in that direction in which it was easy to wound, but impossible to kill.



MAP OF MULPATHE GROUNDS.



BRINGING THE INDIGO IN CARTS, ENLOADING, ETC.

## LETTER VIII.

*Mulnath, July 29th.*

WHEN the season has arrived for manufacturing, all becomes life and animation about a Factory. If it be a small one, limited in its operations—say producing about 250 muns, or 17 cwt. of Indigo in its season, it is probable that the immediate neighbourhood of the works furnishes all the necessary labourers—peasants hired expressly for the manufacturing period; but if the factory be a large one, like this of Mulnath, probably upwards of one hundred men have to be summoned from some bordering district. Many come from Midnapore, but the greater number belong to some of the jungle tribes of Maunbhoom, or Simbhoom—sometimes termed *Jungle Mehars*, in the neighbourhood of Bankra, but commonly called Bhoona, or Bhoonwa Coolies.

These poor people, who are thus willing to come a journey of probably one hundred and twenty miles, in order to obtain the advantage of employment upon a small salary for a brief period, receive, it may be, three Roopees in advance, ere quitting their homes, to provide for the support of their families during their absence; and such is their frugality until returning that they generally take back with them about nine-tenths of their earnings.



They purchase, probably, a roopee's worth of rice—enough to serve them during their whole stay, and the moment their morning's work has been completed, they resort to the nearest stream or lake to obtain, either by a small fishing net, or the simple contrivance I have already described to you, a few small fish to cook with it,—and thus their simple meals are supplied at a cost of little more than the plain rice. In this they have been peculiarly favoured by the late inundations, which have brought numerous little streams from the river across the low land, wherein numbers may be seen fishing, bathing, or watering their cattle, free from the fear of alligators' jaws.



RIVER FLOWING INTO THE LAKE. PEOPLE FISHING, ETC.

Amongst the Bhoona Coolies, however, great numbers not only bring their wives and children with them, but settle, and form villages exclusively of their own tribe,—as they have done at Mulnath, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Factory, where, at the present time, the women are as busily engaged as the men. In this case their children may be seen patiently and gravely sitting at the water's edge, with a bit of line, to which a thorn of the babool tree serves for a hook, and a small twig of wood for a rod, when in less than an hour they have probably caught as many fish, (abounding at the present time), as serve at least for a seasoning to the frugal meal of rice which is prepared for the whole family. The salaries of these labourers differ. The Midnapore men receive four Roopees per month (about 8s.), the Bhoona only three, and the women and boys two Roopees per month. Advantages, however, in other ways, are offered them to encourage their settling upon the spot. They are allowed to rent land for

their own cultivation at half nerick, or rent,—an advantage of which they appear glad to avail themselves.



THE FACTORY-ROUSE, ETC.

And now the Factory is cleared out, and the repairs of the various working parts, that have been lying idle for nine months, duly seen to.



CUTTING THE PLANT.

Men professing the various crafts of Bricklayer, Ironsmith, and Carpenter, are ready at hand in the village. The pumps are put in order; the godown,



or warehouse, arranged for reception of the Indigo; boats, carts, and people are got ready to bring in the produce; and the cutting of the plant, which has now attained its full growth of about five feet, commences.

Having already explained to you the difference between Ryutee and Neezabad, or private cultivation,\* I need here only mention that in the former system, the Ryut cuts and packs the plant at his own cost and labour, but the Factory pays the expense of the conveyance to the vats. Now, as the cultivation pertaining to one factory alone extends over a space of probably forty square miles—I do not mean uninterruptedly, but alternately, it may be, with rice and other produce—numerous conveyances are, of course, requisite to bring the plant to the works; and as the rivers, creeks,



BRINGING THE INDIGO IN BOATS.

and lakes of this part of Bengal, from their singular and numerous sinuosities, intersect the country in all directions, and at the present season are swollen to an extraordinary degree, uniting themselves to each other, and thus creating fresh and innumerable channels, much the greater quantity of plant is brought by boat, whilst the remainder—the produce of fields contiguous to the Factory, or otherwise more conveniently brought by land—is conveyed on the common Hackree, or Bullock-cart.

On arriving at the Factory ground, or *Neel Kola*, as it is termed—which here is a gentle slope, extending from the vats down to the lake, and shaded by a picturesque cluster or grove of luxuriant Toon trees,—the plant, if belonging to the Factory, is at once carried up and piled, or thrown loosely into the vat, ready for use; but if belonging to the Ryuts, an account has to be kept of the quantity brought, and this is done by the *Oozundar*, or

\* Page 89.

Measurer, who, with an iron chain of precisely six feet in length, measures round the girth of the plant, and as much as this embraces is termed a *Bundle*. It is probably not easy to suggest a better method—unless an ingeniously contrived machine, capable of regulating pressure—but the mode I have just described certainly seems open to abuse and objection. A



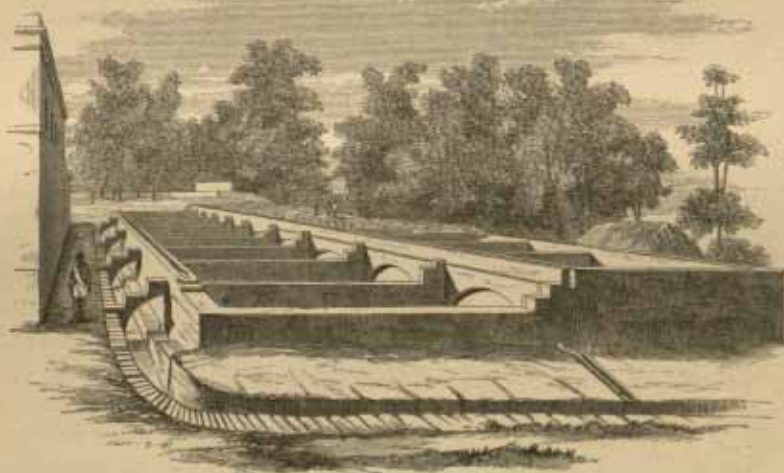
CART OF INDIGO.

powerful arm will compress far more plant than a weak one. But there can be little doubt how the energies of both may be stimulated, or moderated, by spite or a bribe; and the Oozundar does not "move in a circle of society" which would render him above the temptation. In this way either the Ryut or the Factory may be wronged. If the plant were always of its full growth of about five feet, the danger to the Ryut would be less, because hard stalks are not readily compressed; but the manner of measuring renders it necessary that not only should there be six feet *in girth*, but also *in length*, and to affect this the plant is placed on the ground, end to end, the stalks outward, so that at a bad season, when the plant is stunted, thin, and short, the compression of the chain in the centre takes place, not on a fair proportion of stalk and leaf together, but, it may be, almost exclusively on soft leaves. It is to avoid this inequality and risk that I understand some cultivators, whose produce is sufficient (but these I believe are few), prefer the wholesale measurement *by the vat*, the contents of which, when filled, being well known, offers, it is thought, a more equitable mode of measurement. To this plan of course no objection is made. But in the numerous cases where Ryuts cultivate only a small portion of land, insufficient to fill a vat with plant, recourse must be had to the chain,—for any attempt on their part to unite their produce in order to fill a vat would only



lead to never-ending quarrels between them. In the Tirhoot district, where Indigo is very extensively cultivated, another system altogether is adopted, which is probably much fairer. The ground is measured, and the plant, before being reaped, is valued according to its quality, and paid for as it stands.

Whilst the measuring is going on, and it may be a squabble or two, which either that operation, or the confusion of carts, is not unlikely at times to occasion, are being adjusted, I must familiarize you with the construction of the vats, in which the process of separating the colouring matter from the plant is performed. Here the pencil must assist us. Vats are in pairs, the *upper* and the *lower*, and form a long range of low, well built, and finished brick and plaster buildings, closely tiled on the floor, but open to the sky above. This is essential. They are about twenty-one feet square, by three and a half feet in depth. In a small Factory there are probably not more than six pairs of these vats, but in the more extensive kind seldom less than twelve. At Mulnath I find not only these twelve, but



THE VATS.

three extra detached pairs, to meet the possible happy fortune of a more than ordinarily good season requiring their aid; for where there is an abundance of plant no delay is admissible in cutting. Independently of overgrowth being prejudicial, a sudden rise in the river might destroy several hundred acres of plant upon its margin in the course of a single night; and when cut it cannot be stacked like corn, because it would rot. It must be manufactured at once. Occasionally, however, plant arriving very late in the

evening is kept until morning by spreading it out upon the ground to prevent fermentation, which, if the plant be wet, would occur if left in closely-packed bundles or sheaves.

During ordinary or indifferent periods, probably not more than six or eight pairs of vats are brought into use, but at more prosperous seasons the whole fifteen have been kept in constant employ. A season so prosperous is of course pronounced "a bumper,"—and the heart of the Planter is made "fat with joy."—It had need,—for there is "a time to weep and a time to laugh;"—the last three seasons have probably been disastrous,—or it may be that the "three ears, blighted and withered," are at hand. Our intelligent friend, the native doctor, here informs me that it is generally thought amongst the natives that prosperity and adversity are oftentimes alternately shared by the Planters and the rice cultivators;—that for three years moderation in rain, and much sun, which is injurious to rice, favours the Indigo, and that the succeeding three years of inundation and much rain, that are destructive to Indigo, is beneficial to rice. The present season, from the *excess* of inundation, has not only proved disastrous to indigo prospects, but in some parts of the country where the land is very low, and the inundations proved heavy, the Ous rice crops have been entirely submerged—and lost!—Need I picture to you the distress which at such time must follow?



THE NEEL KOLA CARRYING INDIGO TO THE VATS.

It is now time to return to the sloping ground, or Neel Kola, where I left them measuring, squabbling, bundling out the plant from boat and cart, and hallooing to, or abusing the poor cows which, the moment they are



released from the yoke, quietly turn about, and very wisely browse upon the green plant they have been at the labour of bringing so far.

And now the work of packing commences. Men and women are busily engaged in carrying the plant up to the vats—generally on the head, but sometimes by men, more expeditiously, on a couple of bamboos, carried between two of them, like a sedan chair, on which the Indigo is heaped across. The uppers vats having been cleaned out and plugged up, the plant is closely packed at an angle of 70°, or nearly upright, with the leaf of the lower tier upwards, and of the higher downwards, a few bundles having previously been thrown in horizontally to fill up the corners or angles of that end



WOMEN CARRYING PLANT TO THE VATS.



END OF PRESSING BEAM.

at which the packing commences. Any hollows observable at the top are then filled up by a few bundles opened out and thrown into them, wherever it may be necessary. Probably one hundred official bundles are required to fill a vat. This done, about twenty bamboos are laid at intervals of a foot apart upon the top of the plant and across the vat. Three massive beams of wood, nine or ten inches square, hooked at one end under a strong iron pin passing through two uprights of wood at the upper end of the vat, are then laid over the bamboos, and several men standing on the other end of each, weigh it down until



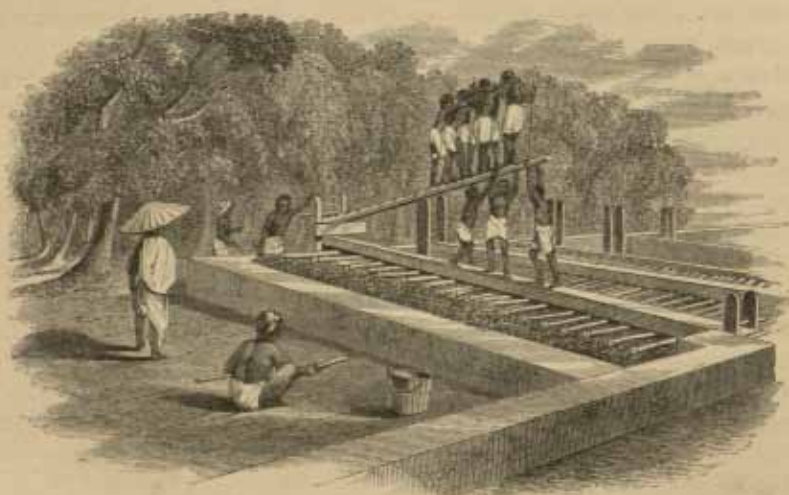
ARRANGEMENT OF BAMBOOS.

sufficiently compressed to admit of an iron pin being passed over it through the upper hole of a corresponding pair of uprights on the opposite side of the vat. A block of wood about six inches square, and a couple of feet in length, is then laid across the beam, close to the uprights, to serve as a fulcrum on which the final power of a long lever is applied to effect the necessary compression of the plant. This lever is a beam of wood, about



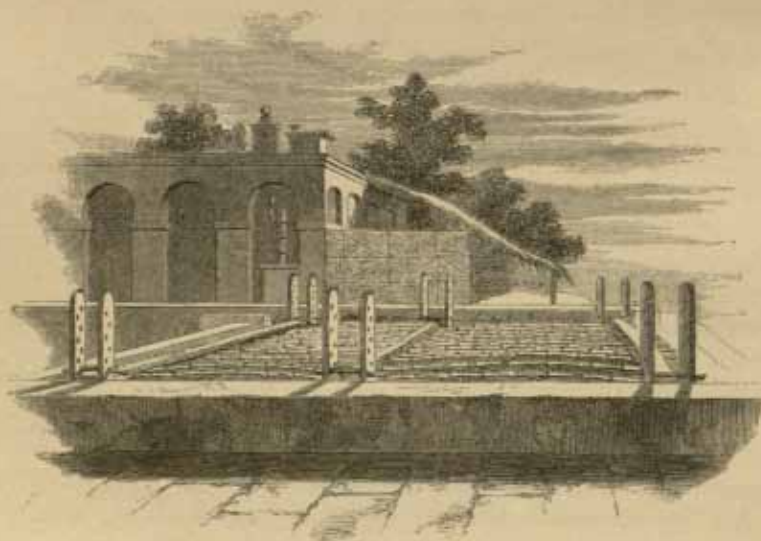
PRESSING LEVER.

fifteen feet in length, with a pair of powerful iron hooks at one end. This is hooked under a second and upper pin, when six or eight men, some standing on, and others hanging by the end, weigh it down till the entire surface of the plant is pressed to its proper level, which is to within six or eight inches of the top of the vat. The beam being then made fast by shifting the first pin lower down in the uprights, and the same operation gone through with each of the beams, the contents of the vat are ready for steeping.



PRESSING THE PLANT.

Leaving it so for a short time, I have now to direct your attention to the long line of aqueduct leading from the river side to the Factory,\*—no longer, as in the dry season, imperfect, and many feet above the water,



VAT FILLED AND READY FOR STEEPING.

but complete, and at the Factory end, where before carts passed beneath it on dry ground, now only four or five inches above the surface of the water.

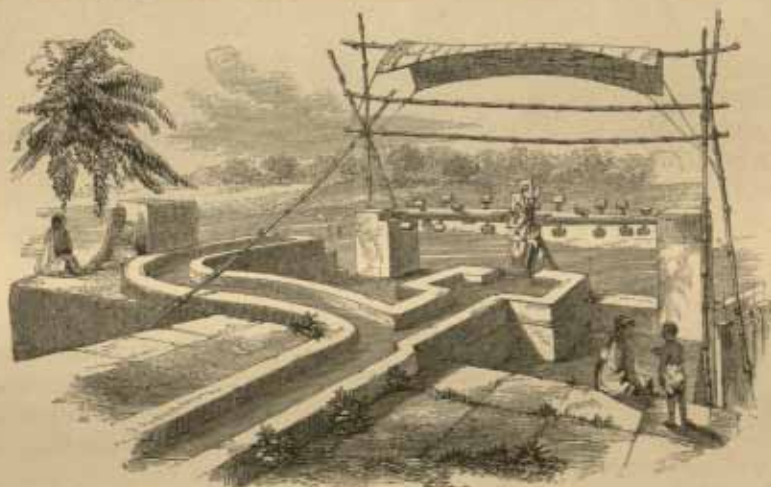
\* See page 34.



This shows the lake to have risen about fifteen feet in height during the present season!

At either end of this aqueduct is a Chinese pump.—But here you will, no doubt, ask why, with so fine a sheet of water close to the very vats of the Factory, there should be any necessity for an expensive line of aqueduct, about four hundred feet in length, and two pumps instead of one. I should, therefore, explain that pure *river* water is essential to the success of the steeping, in consequence of its being softer, and possessing some other quality which it is found favours a better development of the colouring matter.

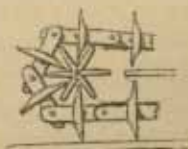
The Chinese pumps being identical in their construction, I need only mention that the further, or outer one, raises the water from the river into the aqueduct, from which it flows into a small reservoir on this side the lake,—thence, by a second Chinese pump, it is raised a step higher, and



CHINESE PUMP, TOP VIEW.

here we may stop for a moment to examine a portion of the construction of these very ingenious pumps, which are worked, you will observe, upon the principle of the tread-mill. A succession of scrapers, linked together like a chain, at intervals of about eight inches from each other, and fitting, [not tightly, but freely, in a wooden trough, drag, or scrape the water up its channel into a second and shorter aqueduct.

To meet the event of a more extensive or rapid supply of water being needed, and also the possibility of the one getting out of repair, provision, you will observe, is made in the masonry for a *second* pump, the channel from which unites itself with that of the first.



SCRAPER.

Mulnath ground being very high, the elevation which the water has attained by means of this pump is insufficient, and therefore a *third* pump is requisite, about thirty yards inland, in order to raise the water into the great reservoir.



CHINESE PUMP WORKING.

You now have a more complete view of the operation, and may observe that the continuous chain of scrapers passes over a wheel at both ends of its journey; that as the upper, or visible half is travelling downwards, the lower carrying the water along with it, is of course running upwards; and that as the upper wheel, forming the centre of the axle which the men are turning, gives motion to the whole, the lower wheel is a mere revolver, turned by the action of the scrapers passing round it. If we step a little nearer, and upon the other side, all this will be more evident.

The construction of the whole machinery will now be intelligible. The box, or trap, is supported at its upper part against the edge of the great reservoir—the middle part by a portion of the bank of the small or lower reservoir, and its foot, which dips into the water to the depth of one of the scrapers, rests upon a small step of masonry. The mode in which the teeth of the wheel or pinion on the treadle act upon the scrapers is now more clearly apparent, and the manner in which they turn at the foot and pass up again at the bottom of the trough will not be less so. I should add that the upper line of scrapers is preserved from coming into contact with the lower by a thin plank interposed between them.

Though the Chinese pump may appear to be a very complicated piece of



machinery, as it is also a terribly noisy one, it has important advantages ;—the ease with which, when out of order, any part is repaired on the premises, by the common Mistree or native carpenter, and the great body of water



NEAR VIEW OF CHINESE PUMP.

it throws up within a short space of time. When well worked by a full complement of six men, it is calculated to discharge 11,136 gallons of water in an hour.

The reservoir being now supplied with the requisite water, we will return to the vat, which we left filled with plant ready for *steeping* ; and this process is effected by opening a sluice or door from the main aqueduct of the reservoir into the vat, and allowing the water to flow in until the plant is covered. It is generally about five or six o'clock in the evening when this operation is completed, and as the time allowed for steeping varies from ten or eleven hours during hot nights, to twelve or twelve and a half during cooler, it is about daylight of the following morning when the time for the next operation has arrived. At that time, accordingly, all are again assembled, and whilst fresh loads of plant begin to arrive in boat and cart, and the various operatives prepare their several departments for the day's proceedings, the Superintendent, or it may be the Planter himself, examines the condition of the vat, the water in which, it will be found, from the swelling of the plant, has risen full six inches. The surface presents a strange mottled appearance in colour—principally of purple and coppery hues, partially covered with a bluish froth. This indicates a



AQUEDUCT SLUICE.

sufficiency of steeping, which, if overdone, would be injurious. It has probably been tested also by dipping a thermometer into the liquid, the temperature of which affords a further guide as to the sufficiency or otherwise of the steeping.

The great plug leading from the bottom of the steeping vat into the lower, or beating vat, is now drawn, and the liquid, of a dull, or sometimes bright orange colour, but at first of horrid odour, is allowed to run out. As it spreads on the floor the orange colour is exchanged for a bright raw green, covered with a beautiful lemon-coloured cream or froth.



CARRYING AWAY THE DEAD PLANT.

The leaves and bamboos being removed from the upper vat, the faded and dead plant, covered with bluish froth, is carried away by the same men and women who brought it, to an appointed place—a spare piece of ground at hand, and spread about to dry. In this condition it is called "*ceetee*,"—of no sweet-smelling savour to the olfactory nerves of strangers, but of perfect indifference to those who have become accustomed to it. In the course of about three months it becomes thoroughly dry, and is finally stacked, in order to furnish economical fuel for the boiler of the Factory at the next manufacturing season. Much of it also is used as manure for the soil, either in the garden or the immediate neighbourhood of the Factory; and the poor belonging to the concern are allowed, I believe, to take away a small supply for their own domestic necessities.

The whole of the liquid having been drawn off into the lower vat, it is then ready for the process of *Beating*.

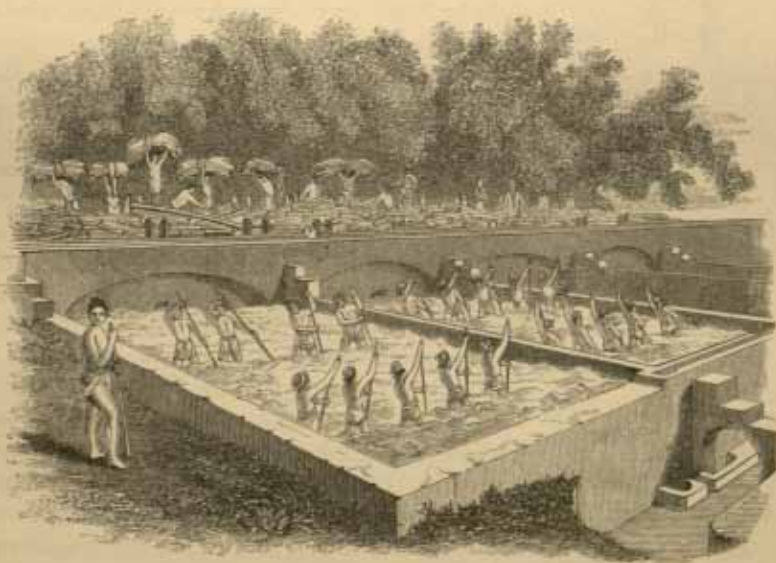


Ten men—the Beaters—now jump into the vat, up to their hips in



THE STACK OF CUTTER, OR DEAD INDIGO PLANT.

the liquid, and ranging themselves, five at each end, commence the work



BEATING THE INDIGO

of beating, which is done by means of a flat piece of bamboo, five feet in

length, cut like an oar, broad at one end, with which they beat, or violently stir, splash, or plough up the liquid, until the whole surface, at all four sides and corners, wherein the men are not actually beating, is covered with heaps of bluish foam, resembling soap-suds, upwards of a foot in thickness, and the whole contents of the vat are in violent commotion. Every conceivable variety of action is given by the men in order to make the beating perfect. They range themselves *vis-à-vis*, and advance, beating until within four feet of each other—then retreat to either end, generally beating in the opposite direction to their companions in front, lest, by all beating in one direction, the force of so many oars together should drive the liquid—too precious to be wasted—over the edge of the vat. They will face to the right—then to the left—changing hands as they do so—then range themselves in one line, and beat from end to end,—then divide again into two as at first—then form a circle, and beat towards each other—"retreating, chasing"—like the figures in a quadrille, and then travel in circle, until the whole contents of the vat are in a whirl.

Upon first running off this liquid, as I have said, it is of a darkish orange colour—then of a light green. On settling in the vat it seems to be a dark green, but upon stirring the surface it appears of a greenish or bright olive; so that I am puzzled to tell you what precise colour it really has, for being, like the sea, exposed to the sky, in like way its quantity and the state of the



A BHOOTA COOLIE, VAT-BEATER.

weather influence its appearance. When the beating commences, however, it generally presents a delicate light green complexion. This, through a variety of beautiful changes, gradually darkens into a prussian green, and from that, as the beating continues, and the colouring matter more perfectly develops itself (the froth having almost entirely subsided), into the intense deep blue of the ocean in stormy weather.

By this time the men present the oddest and wildest appearance imaginable. From the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet they are of course deep dyed and dripping with the blue colouring matter. You think of "blue devils"—but only to laugh, as at many other facetiæ in this life, when idealities and realities are brought together; for in truth these are "merry devils," who by the comicality of their appearance, gestures, exclamations, and mirth, are more likely to dispel than encourage the dull spirit in the most misanthropic breast.

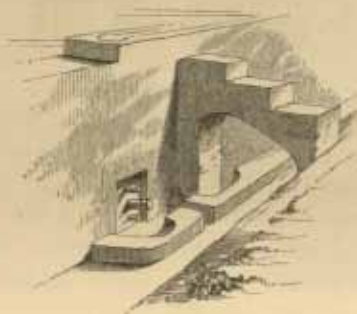
The operation of beating continues for about two hours,—the men amusing themselves and encouraging each other the while by sundry



vehement cries and songs,—generally not particularly distinguished for elegance or purity.

The object of the operation I have just described is to separate the grain or colouring matter from the liquid. A late experiment made here by Mr. F— would seem to show that this is principally effected by *exposure of the liquid to the atmospheric air*, and this of course is accomplished by the “beating,” which by continued ploughing and splashing, exposes every particle of the liquid to the air; but whether this exposure *alone*, without the beating or churning process, would produce altogether the same effect, I am not advised.—The Gomastah or Superintendent, the “Rung Mistree” or Colour man, or the Planter himself, now carefully examines the liquid, by this time of a thorough deep blue, and a small quantity

is frequently taken up on a white plate, and submitted for his inspection. If on resting for a second or two the grain, which is of course exceedingly fine, appears ready to separate and precipitate, and the water is free from blue discolouration, the operation is complete. The whole is then permitted to rest for about two hours, when the fecula or



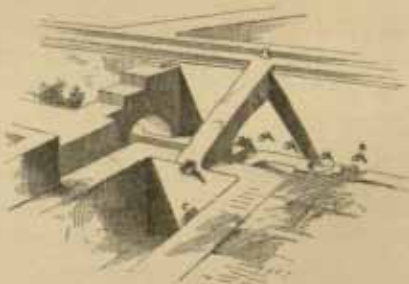
PLUGS AND DRAINS OF LOWER VAT.



LETTING OFF FIRST OF LIQUID.

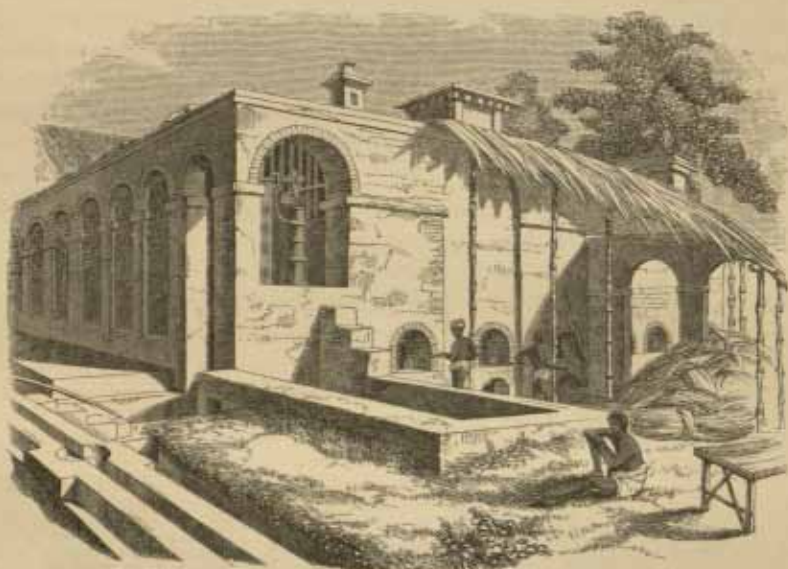
grain, having subsided, the waste water, of a coffee colour, is gradually drawn off from the surface by means of a series of plugs (the upper one at first being only partially opened) placed one above the other in front of the vat, under which plugs there is an aqueduct for the purpose of receiving and carrying away the waste liquid into the river.

The waste water having been gradually drawn off leaves the sediment still mixed with some portion, but not more than is requisite to keep it sufficiently soft to be drawn off. At one time this was effected by being lifted or baled out of the vat, and passed down the tunnel or pipe marked (A) in the marginal sketch, but this was found to occasion much waste in every way, and it is now done by the removal of the lowest plug (B) placed at the very bottom of the vat, when the colouring matter, which is probably four fingers only in depth, is discharged into a second or smaller, and nearer



INDIGO SEDIMENT; MODE OF DRAWING OFF.

aqueduct, through which it is conveyed by the plug-hole (c) into a small reservoir, and from thence it is pumped up into the Boiler, which is immediately behind it.



THE FURNACES.

The Furnaces are found at the end of the Factory; the former attended by a couple of Stokers, and fed with the Cetee or dried plant, as I have already mentioned. The only view we can obtain of the Boilers is from their upper part, where at the farther and outer end the pump is seen to communicate with them. In some Factories the Indigo is kept stirred in the Boilers by means of a perpendicular rod in the centre, fitted with cross pieces or spokes, which are kept in motion by a man or boy engaged to turn the apparatus.



THE BOILERS.

The *Boiling*, which is continued for about two hours, being complete, the next process is that of *Straining*.

To effect this the lower part of the boiler communicates, by means of plugs, with the straining table, which is a shallow vat, probably a foot and a half in depth, the lower part of which is



covered with a grating of split bamboos, raised about three inches from the bottom by resting upon solid bamboos. Above the grating the table is divided, by means of bamboo poles placed across it at certain distances, into several compartments, so as to suit the quantity of Indigo manufactured. Over the whole of this is now spread an immense cloth of American sheeting, which is confined in its place, as you will observe, by pegs resembling English clothes-pegs, fitting and jamming the cloth onto the bamboos beneath.



PLAN OF STRAINING TABLE.



STRAINING THE INDIGO.

As the liquid when poured from the Boiler is apt to contain much foreign matter and dirt, a long piece of some coarse kind of cloth is tied to the mouth of the large plug, supposing one only to be used, and held at the other end by an assistant, who keeps it in constant agitation as the liquid runs through onto the Straining Table.

All this being ready, the plug of the Boiler, seen at the further end of the vat or table, is opened, and the Indigo, now a hot and smoking gluten, is run on to the sheet. At first, whilst the cloth is fresh, the water, draining from the mass, carries with it Indigo and all. To prevent the loss this would occasion, the plugs at the lowest part of the Straining Vat are opened, when the liquid running out is caught and retained in a small circular reservoir (part of the aqueduct), from whence, by aid of a hand-shovel or scoop, it is taken up by an attendant, who re-strains it through a small strainer, observable resting on the edges of one of the compartments. This is repeated until the cloth, having swollen, retains a sufficient quantity of sediment in its texture

to prevent any more escaping, and the waste water is no longer blue, but of the same pale coffee colour as that run off from the Beating Vats.

In the event of a "bumper" season having produced a larger amount of fecula than one straining table is capable of receiving, there is an additional table in a corresponding division of the building, onto which a branch plug from the Boilers conveys the fecula.



EXTRA STRAINING TABLE.

The Indigo having been run onto the table about seven in the morning, remains straining until the afternoon, by which time the fecula has been reduced in volume to about two inches. The men then, seizing hold of the lower end of the sheet, haul about two-thirds of the contents onto the remainder, thus increasing the thickness to about six or eight inches, but reducing the surface to one-third. The sheet is now both above and below the Indigo, when the spare

bamboo grating is taken up and placed on the top, and heavy blocks of wood, lids of pressing boxes, or other such weighty material, are placed above the whole. The object of this is to assist in pressing out whatever water may yet remain in the mass preparatory to its final pressing. In this state it is left to drain all night.

At an early hour on the following morning the work of *Pressing* commences; and here it is necessary I should describe the machinery used in the operation. The Pressing Boxes, which are about three feet long, by two broad, are formed of separate pieces of very stout plank, which fasten together by pins, and take to pieces as requisite. The bottom is



BOTTOM OF PRESSING BOX.

scored across into little channels, and pierced with holes where the scorings cross each other. The sides also are pierced, and their upper edges deep scored in like way. The lid, which fits slackly in the Box, has a platform of stout cross pieces raised upon it, the object of which will be apparent when we come to the pressing.



LID OF PRESSING BOX.

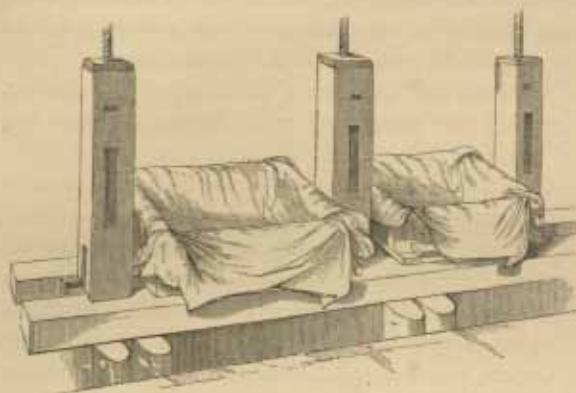
Six boxes of this description having been prepared, each is lined with a sheet of loose cloth sufficiently large on all sides to lap over and cover the upper part of the contents of the box when filled. Thus prepared, two boxes at a time are now placed between the Press pillars, and are ready for the reception of the Indigo. The filling then commences. The Indigo, still a wet thick gluten about the con-



PRESSING BOX COMPLETE.



sistency of butter, is brought in pails, and the boxes are filled until the centre of the mass is three or four inches above the edges of the boxes. The

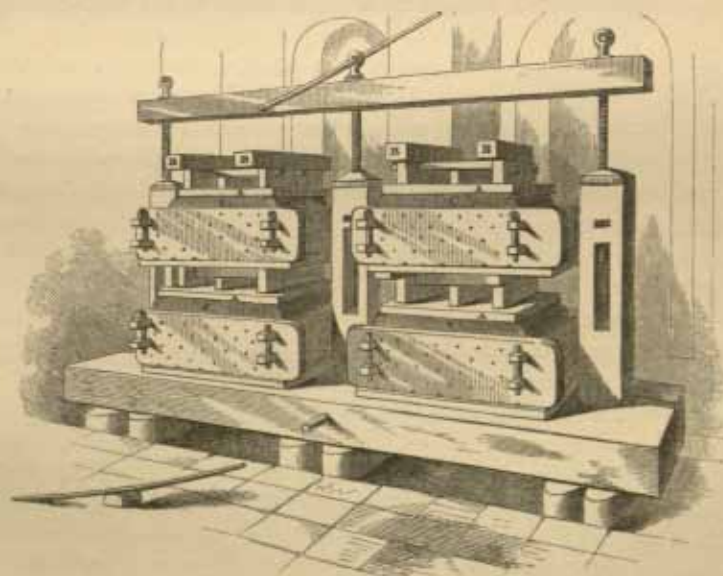


PRESSING BOXES LINED.

The cloths are then carefully laid over it from all four sides, —corner bits also are inserted and turned over, so as to prevent the possibility of the material escaping, and the lids (A) fitted on. Two other boxes being now prepared are placed upon the tops of the first, and square blocks of wood (marked (B) in

the drawing beneath) laid across the lids of the upper ones.

The work of screwing now begins, for until these boxes have been somewhat compressed there is not room for the third pair to be introduced. At first, consequent on the mass of Indigo projecting above the box observable



THE PRESS BEFORE SCREWING.

at (c), the pressure is uneven, and the Pressmen insert small wedges on whichever side the inclination appears, until the mass becomes square, when

they are no longer required. Immediately that the screwing commences the water begins to flow from all sides, and the object of the numerous scorings and piercings in the boxes will now be apparent. Originally I am told, these scorings also served to mark the size of the cakes into which the block was to be cut, but that forms no part of their design in the present day.

The operations I have just described commence at nine in the morning, and end in the evening. At first the screwing is rapid, but as the draining proceeds, and the material becomes harder, an additional turn, or half turn, of the screw is sufficient at long intervals, so that by five or six in the evening the mass of gluten, which in the morning was twelve or thirteen inches thick, has been compressed into the space of four inches, until, in short, the lids have sank within the boxes, and the blocks (u) and the bottoms of the upper boxes rest upon the edges of the lower. Hence you will observe the use of the platforms of cross pieces built upon the lids, the depth of which, nicely adjusted to the required degree, serve as guides to the extent of pressure requisite. In this state the whole is allowed to remain all night until six o'clock next morning, when nearly every particle of water has of course run out, and left the Indigo of precisely the same consistency as a bar of soap.

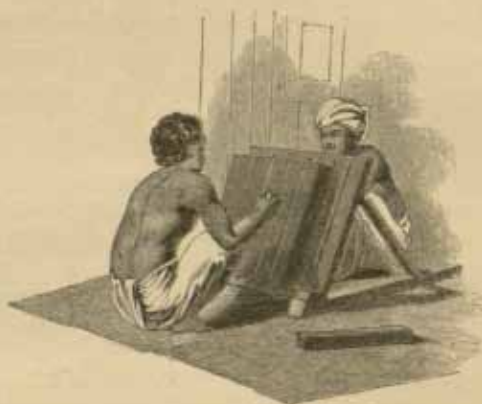
The press is now opened—the boxes removed—one side displaced by knocking out the pins, and the remaining three lifted away from the block of Indigo that rests at the bottom. The cloth is then carefully removed from the block of Indigo, which is trimmed of all those superfluous corners and projections that, consequent on the lid fitting loosely into the boxes, are found to have been squeezed up, a quarter of an inch thick, and an inch and a half high all round the edges.

These cuttings and trimmings are gathered together, and reboiled with the next day's manufacture.

The block is now ready to be cut into cakes; but simple as this operation may appear, the aid of the pencil is necessary for its explanation. The first cutting-frame used resembles a drawing easel, which is pierced into seven perpendicular grooves, extending upwards to within a couple of inches of the upper edge, and downwards about half an inch deep into the ledging, upon which the block of Indigo is carefully lifted and adjusted. This done, two men seat themselves on either side



BLOCK OF INDIGO.



FIRST CUTTING.



of the frame, and passing a wire, to one end of which there is a handle, through the grooves, draw it down from the top to the bottom, and so cut the block into seven long bars. These bars are then carried to a table, where a second cutting frame is ready for its reception. This is a long box, open at the top and at either end, and, like the first frame, grooved into divisions corresponding with the size of cakes into which the Indigo is now finally to be cut. Into this box the bar of Indigo is slid, and this, its last



SECOND CUTTING FRAME.

cutting, is effected by a little instrument resembling a pair of wooden compasses, or shears, with a wire stretched across the large end, which it is almost superfluous to say is simply and rapidly pressed down the grooves through the bar of Indigo.

Being now divided into six cakes, these are handed to the *Stamper*, a man who, standing at the same table, places the cakes, one by one, on a small block of wood, and, after dusting the upper side with fine sifted ashes from the furnace, impresses on each, with a large brass stamp and a wooden mallet, the name of the Factory—the initials of the manufacturer, and a number, denoting the day of its preparation. The moment this operation is complete, the cakes are



THE CUTTER.



CUTTING AND STAMPING THE INDIGO.

carried away by boys to the *Drying Room*, a compartment of which you have seen converted into a school room (*vide p. 45*), where upon bamboo grating or shelves, reaching nearly to the roof, they are ranged in rows, and left to dry for the space, probably, of three months, at the end of which time the weight of each cake has become reduced from about twenty-four ounces to little more than eight.

In this condition the Indigo is ready for *packing*,—and now the carpenter and his mates are busily engaged in preparing the requisite boxes, in which it is carefully packed, and at the season I have already described, is sent down in boats to Calcutta, and shipped for Europe,—where upon being

unpacked against the quarterly sales, it is tossed out of the chests, and all the labour and pains bestowed on the mathematically squared and nicely trimmed and stamped cakes is found in many instances thrown away upon a mass of shapeless broken lumps and blue powder,—traces of which



CARPENTER'S HOUSE AND GROUNDS.

upon the ground,—heavy weather at sea having damaged the chests,—I can remember observing to extend from a ship in the West India Docks, throughout the whole length of the Commercial Road to Cannon Street in the City!

And thus, to the best of my power, I have described to you the whole process of the manufacture of Indigo.







THE JEMADAN'S RESIDENCE, AND SEED GOLAUS.

## LETTER IX.

*Mulaath, August 14th.*

BEFORE taking leave of the subject of the "manufacture" with which my last letter was occupied, it may not be altogether uninteresting if I tell you something more as to the *living* machinery which the operations I have been describing have set to work, and brought into active employment.

There is, first of all, the Gomastah—the head cultivator—Baboo Hurris Chunder Mookerjee—an intelligent—happy-faced, and, I believe, good-natured

Hindoo of the higher or Brahmin order, having far less than common of that business-like calculating physiognomy which is thought characteristic of his class or occupation, and of which, perhaps,



RAM CHUNDER ROY GOMASTAH.



HURRISCHUNDER MOOKERJEE GOMASTAH.

our studious-looking friend here—the Gomastah of one of the out-factories, who came in the other morning on duty,—offers a much greater share.—“But, sir,” said he (after sitting down, at my request, to be drawn), “what will be your *profit* by taking my picture?”—It is questionable whether my reply would afford him a very exalted conception of my business acumen.

The salary of a Gomastah varies from twenty-five to fifty roopees per month—but this is not the extent of his income; and here we fall upon that abomination, respecting which I have already said so much,—the *Dustooree* system. It is, of course, to the Gomastah that the first, and most probably the heaviest instalment of this tax is paid, and what Ryut is there who would dream of its evasion?—Since the date of my former letter, in which I dwelt on this subject, I have been assured by Mr. J—H—, of the Neechindipore concern, that he once endeavoured to put a stop to the villainous practice by paying the money *himself to the Ryuts*! The consequence was precisely that which I have described as taking place with the Calcutta Durwan,—they quietly returned, and paid the Gomastah his *dustooree*! Speaking a few days ago with a very intelligent native of this place, and questioning him respecting the various cultivations of the season, and lastly touching Indigo and the Ryuts, he said:—“Sir, they don’t mind cultivating Indigo;—that is not it,—it is the *dustooree* which is taken from them;”—and the amount which this man assured me was thus taken, appears so unreasonable that I hesitate to repeat it.

We have had a Governor-General who abolished the horrors of Suttee,—another who has further emancipated the poor widow from her thralldom by legalizing her re-marriage,—and if he would now, in similar philanthropic spirit, make the receipt of *Dustooree a penal offence*, (for nothing short of that will stop it), he would, I believe, in the next degree be recognised as a benefactor; for though such a consummation might not have the glory of a conquest over Suttee, or the other social abomination, it would yet, by affording the poor an assurance that the fruit of their labour was *their own* and not another’s, provide no small encouragement to industry, and in a proportionate degree aid the development of its resources.

After the Gomastah we have the Nâib—Baboo Gunga Narain Mookerjee, whose duty is that of gathering in the rents, and paying them over to the Zumeendar. All matters, in short, connected with rent, are in his hands; and his salary is about fifty roopees a month. Following him are the krânees, or writers, on salaries varying, according to their duties and



THE NÂIB GUNGA NARAIN MOOKERJEE.



abilities, from five to thirty roopees. Then the Mât, or field-Sircar, he who is seen on a pony, riding about the fields in the morning, who superintends the cultivation, and measures the land. Then may come the Ameen, an official in charge of a division of the cultivation, under the orders of the Gomastah; and subordinate to the Ameen, again, there is what is called a Tagadgeer,—one who superintends a small portion of the land.

Next, I may introduce our friend Ramdehall—the Jemadar, a burly, big-framed, smart, and intelligent executive official—a sort of private staff—a ‘Fadladeen,’ and ‘man-Friday,’ in short—who, during a long, and I believe, tolerably faithful service with a kind master, has contrived by frugality and speculation (to say nothing of very possible ‘Dustoorree!’) to make himself master of a very respectable-looking group of Seed Golahs and huts, which you can see at the head of this Letter, forming, indeed, the nucleus of a future village, of which in old age he will probably be the comfortable well-to-do head man.



THE JEMADAR.

After the Jemadar, I may name the Burken-dâzees and Chowkeydars, or watchmen employed to guard the premises and the cultivation. Next, the Piador, Chuprassee, or Messenger; and lastly among those who may be considered on the regular staff, or constant employ, is the worthy old Sirdar, superintendent of Coolies, whose happy, good humoured, though puckered, yet bright-eyed little countenance, is indicative of that green old age which habits of temperance and

great activity, are so calculated to ensure.—But of this, perhaps I may say, remarkable little man, upon whom my lady hostess has aptly conferred the *soubriquet* of “the Bird,” I have something to tell you,—for *his* activity, despite his slender frame and spindle limbs, is of no common order.

Upon an occasion of a gentleman guest at Mulnath having very urgent necessity for the dispatch of a letter to Calcutta, in time for the next day’s Overland Mail, Rodee Bishas (such being the little man’s name), was asked if, for a reward, he would undertake the task of carrying the packet. Albeit he had that morning actually walked from Chogda to Mulnath, a distance of



RODEE BISHAS, SUPERINTENDENT OF COOLIES.

sixteen miles (a fact of which his master was unconscious when proposing the additional journey), Rodee Bishas cheerfully undertook it. At four in the afternoon he left Mulnath—not upon a smooth road, but across a rough country—and, walking all night, reached the Bengal Club, in Chowringhee, at *four the next morning!*—fifty-two miles in twelve hours! Having done this, he returned by boat the next evening to Chogda, and from thence, after an additional walk of sixteen miles—on to Mulnath! Now his age is fifty-nine,—and, albeit this in Europe may be little beyond the prime and vigour of life, it is not so, you may suppose, amongst the natives of an Indian clime,—and therefore the task, but for my knowledge that the facts are beyond all doubt, would have appeared incredible. Whatever reward our little pedestrian received, he fully merited one which should have enabled him to take rest for six months afterwards.

Of the manufacturing establishment—that is men, women, boys, cart and boatmen, employed in the works during the manufacturing season, I must deal rather in a tabular statement than in any individual notice of them. Ere doing so, I must premise that the season having been an unfortunate one, only six out of fifteen pair of vats have been at work. For these the quantity of Ryuttee cultivation has amounted to 3162 biggahs, or, say about 105 acres of land,—and of Neez, or private ground, 250 biggahs, whilst the number of Ryuts with whom accounts have been contracted for cultivation, amount to one thousand and sixty-five.

The following Table, then, shows you the duties performed by the people,—how many are of the *Bhoona* tribe,—how many from Midnapore,—how many Dasee—that is, belonging to this part of Bengal—and the salaries they receive per month:—

	<i>Bhoonaz.</i>	<i>Midnapore.</i>	<i>Dasee.</i>	<i>Salaries.</i>
				Ra. As.
Hackrey-men—for services of themselves, and 120 hackries, or carts for bringing in the Indigo . . . . .	.....	—	120	7 8
Boatmen—for 48 boats . . . . .	.....	—	96	9 0
Sirdar, or superintendent of hackries . . . . .	.....	—	1	4 0
Vat-coolies, or beaters . . . . .	72 at 3rs.	40 at 4rs.	—	.. ..
Plant Measurers . . . . .	.....	.....	2	2 0
Chinese Pump Workers . . . . .	.....	.....	30	3 12
Pin-coolies—attendants on the plugs, &c. . . . .	.....	.....	1	4 0
Boiling-house men . . . . .	.....	.....	6	3 0
Stokers, or Furnace-men for the boiler . . . . .	.....	.....	3	3 12
Pressing-men . . . . .	.....	.....	6	3 4
Ghât-motiya women—for carrying the plant . . . . .	6	—	0	2 0
Godown Coolie boys . . . . .	4	—	0	2 0
Sirdar of Coolies . . . . .	2 at 3rs.	2 at 5rs.	1	4 0
Ghât-manjee . . . . .	.....	.....	1	4 0
Cake-cutters . . . . .	.....	.....	1	4 0
Carpenter . . . . .	.....	.....	1	5 0
Blacksmith . . . . .	.....	.....	—	—



The total number of people, therefore, commonly called Coolies, thus employed in the Factory, has been three hundred and ninety-five.

Had the season been fortunately more productive, it is probable that this number would have been doubled ; and as there are seventeen other Factories requiring a similar temporary establishment, the total number of hands employed for about two months in the Mulnath concern at an average season, between the good and the bad, may be something above Ten Thousand. These are, of course, irrespective of about one hundred and fifty regular servants of the higher class, whose duties I have already described to you.

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ALLIGATOR GHÂT.

## LETTER X.

*Mulnath, August 16th.*

My last two Letters have been so entirely occupied with the subject of Indigo and its manufacture, as to have excluded mention of some other matters which have occurred during my present lengthened stay here, and serve to mark other features, exciting and sad, in Mofussul life. Where, indeed, is that Utopian spot in our sublunary state in which there are no sorrows as a set-off to the more pleasing aspect of the scene.

The inundations are now nearly at their height—the Rice cultivators have gathered in their Ous crops, and what is called the *Golah pānee*, which is the red-coloured or muddy water brought down by the streams in their course from the upper provinces, fills the *Eechamuttee*, under cover of which earthy veil the alligators, that had probably, during the hot weather, retired to the *Soonderbunds*, have returned to their accustomed haunts, and two poor women have already, within the past fortnight, fallen sacrifices to these stealthy and rapacious monsters. It is as a protection against these beasts that strong fences of wood and bamboos are planted round some of the *ghâts*—extending about six or eight feet into the river, to afford safety to the people when bathing, or taking water for their domestic purposes—an

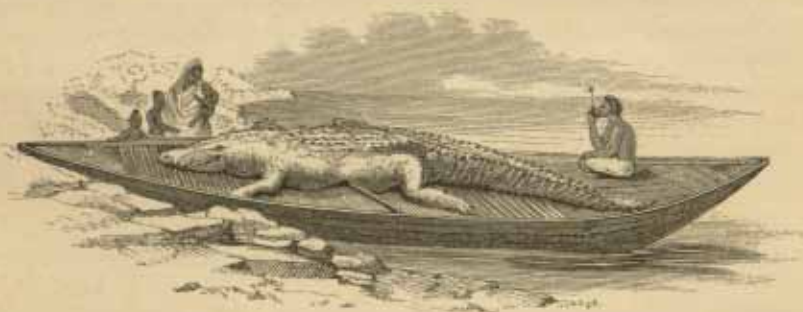


office which almost invariably falls to the women. In vain, however, are even these means of safety provided for ignorant, and frequently obstinate, fatalists. Mr. F—— here was at the pains of erecting one of these fences at the ghât near to the Ferry and Market-place, and surely you would think that those for whose benefit it was done would be at the trifling pains of, at least, attending to its repair. Not only, however, do they neglect this, but very frequently the use of the protection altogether! It was but a few mornings ago, whilst sketching the ghât, that I observed an old woman who, coming for water, and walking down *outside* instead of within the fence, indulged in an ungracious grumble in answer to my remonstrance with her on her want of caution.

Upon the first occasion of my seeing an alligator, I was in company with Mr. S——, whose skill and frequent success in the destruction of this animal has gained him the appellation amongst the natives of the "*Koomeer Sahib*," or the alligator gentleman. Having ascertained where the beast had been last seen, which was amongst some Indigo on a low part of the bank, we, at about eight in the morning, crossed the river, and creeping noiselessly down to within a few paces of his position, which was quickly discovered, my companion's first fire lodged a heavy rifle-ball nearly in the centre of his skull, when with a bound he plunged into the river. In the course of the day circumstances (providentially for me!) compelled my leaving Mr. S—— to pursue the chase alone. By five in the evening he had succeeded, with infinite labour and pains, in (as he supposed) killing the brute (struck with eight balls), when, fastening a rope to its neck, he and his boatmen commenced towing it to the shore. At this moment the women and villagers on the opposite bank, calling out, begged that they might be allowed to see their old enemy; upon which Mr. S—— desiring to gratify them, turned, and had reached mid-stream, when the animal, suddenly reviving, made a plunge into the boat, which instantly upset, and every soul, of course, was thrown into the river! Most fortunately my friend—his servant, and boatmen, all could swim, and safely reached the shore. Had I continued of the party, as I cannot swim an inch, my fortune might have been otherwise. It was but a dying struggle on the part of the alligator, which, with the boat, immediately sank, but was recovered in the course of the following morning and brought down, boat and all, to the Factory ghât.

Upon opening this brute, whose '*post mortem*' appearance is here presented to you, and which measured fourteen feet and a half in length, there were found in the stomach, besides human bones and hair (the latter in large quantities), metal bangles, armlets (now in your possession), rings, and such like ornaments, which were evidence of his having carried off, at the least, four women,—without knowing how many men and children, who wear no ornaments, may have been added to the number of his unfortunate victims! Verily, "truth is stranger than fiction." We are amused at the German legend of the "Dragon of Rhodes," but its author is not guilty of the

extravagance, as it would be deemed, of representing the people daily flocking to the haunt of the beast, and voluntarily exposing themselves to the danger of his jaws. Yet do these poor simple, and generally timid villagers of Bengal, knowing that this monster had for years taken up his post, like a sentry, before their village, confining his beat (from which an alligator is seldom, if ever known to wander, until change of season), to one reach, or bend in the river, whereon their village is situated, daily come down to bathe, either with no protection at all, or, if any, nothing better than the frail and impaired fence I have already described,—some of them extending probably only half-way round the ghât! At two such ghâts were, upon the morning I have referred to, some half-dozen poor women, bathing as unconcernedly as though they had been in the Thames, whilst the brute we were then hunting was actually swimming below the surface within thirty yards of them.—“What can we do?” they replied, in answer to my caution,—“we must bathe, and fetch water!”



DEAD ALLIGATOR.

My friend, Mr. F——, however, gave me a far more marvellous illustration of the ignorance and lamentable fatalism with which these poor people are blinded. Riding by the river side one morning he heard a heavy splash, and immediately saw a fisherman rush up the bank, whilst a disappointed alligator, which had sprung at him but missed his prey, was retreating. With all imaginary coolness, the man walked not more than one hundred yards lower down the river, went down again into the water, middle deep, and resumed his occupation as though nothing had happened! Mr. F——remonstratingly asked the people about why they permitted him to do so? when, with the most amusing and good-humoured *sang froid*, they replied—“*Uh Sahib, jillia wallah kokono khôee nâ!*”——“Oh, sir, they won't eat fishermen!”

On the occasion of the first of the melancholy accidents I have referred to as having occurred lately, a poor woman was standing several feet from the water's edge, bargaining with a fisherman for his fish, when an alligator stealthily approached the bank, and with a sudden wheel of his body, swept



her with his tail off the land, and, instantly seizing her, disappeared! I was strolling on the river's bank myself at the time, and on reaching home and hearing what had occurred, went off to the spot, where I found a servant firing at the animal with a fowling-piece. It was an immense brute, appearing to me, as it swam under the bank where I stood, full a yard in breadth across the back! When first seen, it was swimming about with the unfortunate woman in its monstrous jaws. The first shot which struck him induced him to drop his unfortunate prey—but it was, of course, too late—the poor creature was already dead.

Not more than ten days had elapsed since this occurrence, when we received intelligence that another poor woman had been carried off from a village called Madeapore, on the other side of the river. Early in the morning I joined Mr. F—— in a visit to the spot, and amid cries of lamentation, we were led to the hut of the unfortunate deceased, where the bereaved were bewailing the loss of a youthful wife—she was but seventeen years of age—the mother of two unfortunate infants under three. Having ridden for some distance along the bank of the river we went back to the village, and leaving instruction, should the brute make his appearance there again, immediately to give us notice, we returned to Mulnath. Scarcely had we arrived there, when a man from the village came running in with information that the alligator had again come up,—a thing hardly anticipated at the time, as this animal, after a capture and meal of this kind, is seldom seen again for two or three days. Hastily swallowing a cup of tea, and provided with rifle and ammunition, I recrossed the river, and rode to the village; for, albeit no Nimrod, the scene at the village had so excited my feelings that I was burning for retribution on the brute that had caused so much misery, and vowed in my heart to rid the place by his destruction if I could effect it.

I was met by a group of people, who told me that the animal was then on the bank close at hand, but, ere I could even load, the noise created by so many talking gave the alarm, and a heavy splash in the water announced that my best chance was already gone. In about ten minutes, however, the beast was discovered high and dry on the opposite bank of the river, which was at this place about one hundred yards in breadth. His appearance at this distance was that of a fallen trunk of a tree, for which, indeed, without the aid of more experienced eyes, I should certainly at first have taken him. Firing, I struck him in the side, when, with a sort of somerset, he plunged into the river. A wounded alligator is generally known to come to the surface again in about ten minutes, and within that time this one made his appearance again in mid-stream. A second shot struck him in the side of the head, and again plunging beneath the surface he disappeared for a similar period; when again rising, I struck him in the neck, and a shout from the villagers, who were watching the proceedings, announced their conviction—as it was my own hope—that he was *mārd hooa*—killed. I was not destined to be so fortunate, however. Killing an alligator is a matter not so easy of

accomplishment, even to the most experienced, as my friend Mr. S—'s adventure would show you; but to a novice it offers difficulties in the way of skill, activity, patience, and endurance, of no small magnitude. Besides, my first shot was ill-judged. Like the Dragon of Rhodes, the alligator is said to offer but one vulnerable part—and that is the vertebrae of the neck; unless it be also under the fore shoulder. On examination of the skull, the brain is found to occupy a space not more than two inches in diameter, and that is surrounded by a large mass of bone, as though Nature in forming the animal had determined to compensate for the paucity of brain by the amount of protection she afforded to it.

The animal I was hunting, however, finding the place too hot, now took to travelling. Obtaining a fisherman's boat from the village, I immediately pursued, and commenced a wearisome chase from side to side—backwards and forwards, hither and thither, until five o'clock in the evening, when being late—fairly disheartened, and burnt crimson from exposure to the fierce sun throughout the day (an August day!) I returned home, having succeeded only—unless he subsequently died of his wounds—in driving the beast a mile or two from the village he had hitherto haunted.

Two days afterwards, accompanied by my friends of Roodapore (Mr. S—, the "Koomer Sahib,"—and Mr. M—), I returned to the spot where I had last seen the Madeapore alligator. Here I had well nigh been the hunted in place of the hunter; for crossing the river in a boat, and clambering the bank, a branch of the jungle by which I held gave way, and I *fell in* at a spot where a few minutes afterwards an alligator *came up*! Whether this was the same beast I had there chased, or another, it is impossible to say, but our united efforts proved insufficient for his capture. Mr. M—'s pursuits, however, being little more than my own of a *sporting* character, his want of success was not more to be surprised at, and Mr. S— having met with an accident, took little or no part.

Mr. F— informs me that upon an average about a dozen or more deaths occur in the course of every year in the immediate neighbourhood of Mulnath from the ravages of the alligator. Conversing yesterday with the Jemadar, who accompanied me in one of my walks to the river side, he assured me that the deaths were numerous, but that, consequent on the dread which the poor people have of a visit from the *Daroga* and his myrmidons, on a sort of mock coroner's inquiry, and the fear of being summoned to the Kishnaghur courts, they had an object in *concealing* rather than in making known the occurrences.



SKULL OF AN ALLIGATOR.





CHOUKETHAH OR WATCHMAN'S HUT.

## LETTER XI.

*September 30th.*

INDULGING in a long and interesting ramble amongst the villages this morning, it struck me, that whilst skimming over little more than the mere surface of native life and manners, as I have hitherto done, you would be interested by going a little deeper—knowing something more, in short, of the domestic economy and social condition of the people around us than I have hitherto attempted to introduce you to. Instead, therefore, of wandering about the exterior of their huts, and contenting ourselves with admiring their rustic features and pictorial aspect, let us step closer, and without violence to the sanctity of Hindoo privacy, or Mohummudan prejudice and decorum, lift the *purdah* from the door—peep within, and observe its humble inmates,—for humble they are.

The interior of the dwelling—the outer division of it (for it may be in two parts), I have already described to you—is “poor indeed!” The walls like the floor, are of pure white smooth mud. There is a little square window at one end, scarce eighteen inches wide, and five or six feet high; whilst beneath the eaves there is a space also to permit the escape of smoke. Some trifling superiority may exist between this and the huts, or bungalows,

of those in better or in middling circumstances—which may be more commodious—have mat walls instead of mud—be furnished with wooden doors—and have either a large window, or a pair of windows, with wooden bars and rustic shutters to them; but generally speaking there is little variety between the two extremes—the dwelling I have described, and the brick-built houses of the rich. To return, then, to the humble cottage. Its master is in the fields, attending to his crops, or other duty. The wife is busy within the hut; which “serves her for kitchen, for parlour, and hall.”—But she is a mother also,—and it is to the occupant of the grass mat near the entrance that I wish to direct your attention.—There lies her little one.—It may be a *boy*—or, in Hindoo estimation, less happily, a *girl*—“an animal (as the modest young gentleman in *Punch* observes), of a decidedly inferior sort.” With the Hindoo, however, I believe this disparaging estimate arises in reality not altogether from an assumed inferiority in creation, but very considerably, also, from the troubles and anxieties which are incidental to the disposal of a *daughter* when she has arrived at, so called, *maturity*, and when the evils of their own social abominations may cast her on their hands for life—a *widow*!

And here, it may properly be observed, that the Asiatic and the European, of certain classes, share much alike in the difficulties which obstruct the matrimonial path. The Brahmin, or other Hindoo of high caste, is neither at liberty himself to marry with a lower degree, nor so to unite his daughter. She must be matched with one who is her equal,—or her whole family and kindred are dishonoured; and so “caste,” as at present dominant amongst the people, whatever the spirit of the Mahābhārāt and other of the Shastras may say about it,\* does for the Hindoo what rank, position, and education, do for the European; to whom, setting aside the demands of equality in rank, it is not more abhorrent to be united to one of low habits and education, than to the Brahmin or other high-caste father it would be to see his daughter espoused in a grade or order one step below his own.

As however, in European, so in Asiatic life, few are either the conventionalities or intellectual bars that stand in the marriage way of the lower and uneducated orders; and with this comforting conclusion in their favour, let us descend to our Indian plains again, and resume our observation of the inmates of the hut. Your sex shall have its Christian place—priority:—the little occupant of the mat shall be a girl. She is humble enough, and few conventionalities will come in *her* way. So our little maiden shall have a husband in good time—and far too soon, it may be. We will not, therefore, be in greater haste than are her parents—but stop with her where she is—go where she goes, and watch her progress forward.

Her apparel, you observe, is ample. Her long-clothes “liberal as the air;” her crinoline, wide as the heavens themselves—in short, she is in want of *nothing*—all is provided. An Indian April day is cloak and blanket

\* See “What is Caste?” By the Rev. Dr. Duff.



enough; but her bright amber skin shines, you may remark, more bright than schoolboy's "morning face." Christian mothers are often in the habit of wasting the delicious "cold drawn" contents of a certain oil-bottle, by pouring it down the throats of their unfortunate little ones; but an Indian mother is more frugal. Instead of troubling herself with its *interior*, which is generally left to take care of itself, or corrected by simple alteration of habits, or diet—she more frequently endeavours to fortify the *exterior*, and adorns its little figure by a coating of *Mustard Oil*—which serves as triple protection against heat, cold, and mosquitoes. From the day of her birth such has been her morning toilet, and until she be a year old such it will probably continue; and thus adorned, scarce was she five days old, probably, ere she was placed in the sun, as she may have been every morning since—either for warmth in the cold weather, or to acclimate her to its beams in the hot.—Whatever skin, therefore, the little one possessed when born, and comparatively it was very fair, you will not wonder at the depth of tint it has since acquired.

She is now five months old. About the completion of her second, she entered upon her first noticeable step in life—she obtained a name. The parents consulted the astrologer, and he the heavenly bodies; and having determined upon the star that seemed ascendant on her birth, the mother, who generally has the privilege of choice, was provided with the first letter in its designation, and (in accordance with the usual practice of borrowing the name of a god or flower), she selected one, the initial letter of which corresponded with that of the star of her child's nativity. Her choice, you will admit, was not displeasing. She named her little one *Krishtomonee*, literally *The Jewel of Krishna*. The names of the gods are generally chosen, because it is believed that their repetition is meritorious, and, operating like fire, consumes all sin. This done, the astrologer received whatever fee may have been within the compass of the parents' means, and departed. Nor godfather nor godmother vowed anything in *her* name,—nor prayer was uttered, nor blessing of any kind was sought on her behalf; and with no other acquisition than her fine name, she is now left to kick her heels upon the mat when her mother is busy, or to straddle across her hip when she goes to-market or to bring water from the river side.

Thus far, I may here remark, there has been little to distinguish her from the children of the higher classes. *Their* means, of course, enable them to adorn their children in a superior manner, and to dress them at an earlier period, and in a costlier fashion; but there is the good chance, also, in these advancing days, as I shall presently have occasion to shew you, that the mother may be a reading woman. We will endeavour to see *what* she reads, by-and-bye, and simply here observe that, in this case, there can hardly fail to be some advantage in mind and temper, exercising an influence favourable to the training of her children. But alas! that mother is perhaps, never abroad at all, unless in a covered conveyance;—she knows less of the world than

does the menial who sweeps her floor, and her children are kept rigidly *within doors*, where, if they benefit by incurring less of evil to their minds, they lose by suffering serious injury to their bodies,—and he will be a cunning anatomist who shall shew us their *independence* of each other.

To return, however, to our little rustic maiden. She is left to run about, in-doors or out, very much in the same freedom of attire in which we first observed her, until about her sixth year, when it is more than probable she has become a very charming little object; for, with her large and lustrous black eyes, full of soft and gentle radiance—her rich jet hair fastened in a well-formed knot crowning her head, surmounted by a crimson flower;—and her graceful little form, still free from fettering garments, but possibly ornamented with silver bangles and anklets—a necklace of beads, and, haply, a chain of silver encircling her hips—she forms the type of a very considerable portion of the Hindoo children, who about this age and upward—until, indeed, lost sight of by European eyes—are, generally speaking, exceedingly pleasing and interesting.

But, long ere this, our little subject has owned a playmate and a brother; on whom—superior creature that he is—the bestowal of his *name*, was an event attended with infinitely more concern and respect than was permitted to honour his little sister on that occasion. Unlike her, he waited till his sixth month, when a variety of ceremonies were performed, and oblations offered to the manes of his ancestors, under the presidency of the family priest.—And here you see, whatever may exist *in theory*—is an instance in *practice*, of that invidious distinction which it is impossible to deny has ever been exhibited in Hindoo estimation of the sexes.

Let us, however, now view the juveniles as brother and sister—as son and daughter, and as developing the germs of the future man and woman. Thus beginning, we shall find, I believe, little to distinguish them either morally or intellectually, from the children of their conquerors. We shall not, indeed, except in isolated instances, find the broad, deep, Saxon head, with its suggested capabilities of subtle and profound study, and fruitfulness in the Western wonders of art, science, and literature; but I think we may trace indication of qualities which have often a greater influence over the general conduct and happiness of a people than even the boldest flights of genius.

Look at our little maiden. Fresh, as it were, from the hand of her Maker, does she not exhibit in every expression of her face, and movement of hand and limb, indications of those feminine graces which we associate with gentleness and goodness of *heart* as their great fountain?—and if “out of the heart” proceed so many evils, is it not also, when good and pure, the source of incalculable good?—Look, too, at her little brother; we shall find in him a large share of his sister’s gentleness and timidity. We shall not make a hero of him, certainly; climate and the degenerate emas-



culating habits of his forefathers, have wrought against that,—against all the developments which prompt to the Temple of the Muses, or the paths of glory. It may require the up-hill labour and silent discipline of many generations,—nursed by good and intellectual mothers,—trained by physically energetic fathers,—parents at once loved, revered, and themselves emancipated from ignorance, idolatry, and superstition,—before the elements of heroism or intellectual greatness germinate in the Hindoo. Yet, even now, we find him, in childhood, apprehensive, intelligent, teachable,—and so far from wanting in acuteness, that it is too frequently displayed with dangerous precocity.

Such, we will suppose, is Nature's material. Let us now see what man does with it;—how he "improves each shining hour" of these little ones existence—how, rather, in short, he undoes God's work, and mars His purposes.

Yesterday was a festival. The brother and sister were dressed for the occasion, either in all the chaste neatness of white muslin, or the gaiety of pink or blue, trimmed with gold or silver edging. The graceful figure of the little maiden, half-hidden only, was rendered, if possible, more graceful by the simple but exquisitely tasteful arrangement of a single garment, that without "band, or gusset, or seam," fell from waist, shoulders, and head-knot—or floated out on the breeze in the most artistic of folds and curves. They have been to the river-side, it may be—half-deafened on the road by that most outrageous tumult of sounds which the poor creatures are accustomed to believe is *Music*. They perhaps, have visited a kind of bazar, and returned home rejoicing in the possession of some painted mud toys—hideous representations of hideous divinities, or equally outrageous libels upon cats, elephants, or ayahs;—and upon these, and only such as these, exquisite productions of the Fine Arts, is the *taste* of the little ones modelled for ever after. Should we then be surprised or angry that, when grown up, and shewn a European drawing, they turn it upside down, or, at least, provokingly persist in viewing it *diagonally*—as though endeavouring to discover some 'angle of incidence' which might agree with their own reflections upon the matter? Well; the festival and all its noisy excitements are over; and the children have possibly been led through the great city of the Sahibs, (for I am not confining our hut and its inmates to any precise locality). Has their mother directed their attention to the varied objects of curiosity they have met with on their way—the buildings—the shops—the vehicles, or the great ships in the river?—Alas! poor soul, she is as much a child as they. When she herself was never trained to regard, how can she be expected to *impart*? With more timorous steps even than her children, she hurries noiselessly along, amidst a group of others as timid as herself—her face half-hidden—hardly daring to turn her head, and if accidentally catching the eye, or even a glimpse of the figure of a European—darting forward as though he were a satyr or a tiger. As for

the ships, and all other matters of Western power, skill, curiosity, or novelty, she looks furtively at them, with an expression of something like silent awe; covers her mouth with part of her garment, and seems to say with the preacher—"these things are too wonderful for me."

But the little folk are at home again. They have gained nothing by their visit abroad but their frightful mud "*khelonas*,"—or perhaps, a paper rattle, or windmill, such as we have seen in the streets of London. No other infantile pabulum have they on which to exercise the curiosity, ingenuity, or intelligence of their minds, the thousand and one channels through which the streams of knowledge flow to the European child from a whole world of bright intelligence—of toys, and playthings, and pictures, and books, and educated parents and friends, and elder brothers and sisters—all are shut to these little ones. Nearly all is cimmerian mental darkness around them. Of course, in all this, I am keeping strictly to my little rustics,—or at the most, referring to the children of the middle classes, amongst whom, indeed "Progress" has only planted an exceptional footstep here and there. I am speaking of the million.



BHOONA VILLAGE.

And now the returned little ones are at play. The paper rattles and windmills are already demolished. The mud toys have lost, if not the brilliancy, at least the novelty of their colours—and the child must be barbarous indeed that can find rest or pleasure for its eye in any other quality of those caricatures. So the dust, or the mud, or broken bits of water vessels, or a few cowrees or shells, are employed for the erection of houses and gardens.



They are quiet, perhaps I may say grave children. The joyous hilarity of well-fed and vigorous European juveniles of similar age, is wanting. Possibly, however, they have a trifling quarrel. Master Bonomálee may have broken down Miss Krishtomónee's dust-castle; and Miss K—— having, it may be, revenged herself by a tug at his hair, bolts into the hut for protection against the consequences. This is not frequent,—but *when* happening,—does a fond and anxious mother remind them that “Little children's hands were never made each others' eyes to tear?” Does she read to them from good Dr. Watts, or sweet Mrs. Barbauld, about the beauties of “Brotherly love and kindness?”—of affection, gentleness, forbearance, humanity?—Above all, perhaps, does she, in listening to their several statements of quarrel,—dwell earnestly, or for one moment, on that one great spring of moral conduct—the great root of all principle—the root which she herself well knows is amongst the weakest in the minds of all her friends and neighbours, and kindred—the holiness of *truth*?—Alas! she cannot; she knows its want, but not its holiness. Still further: does she ever attempt to direct or stimulate her children's minds by instructive or amusing stories,—by suggestive pictures of the wonders and beauties of creation in the animal or vegetable kingdom—or even with the humblest illustrations of ‘Goody Two-Shoes,’ or ‘Jack and the Beanstalk?’ Not she, poor woman! The world of Art is a dead blank to her;—unless, indeed, it may point to yonder scarlet frame, in which is a splendid pre-Raphaelite or pre-Adamite picture of the mountain-born, sanguinary, and bespangled Goddess *Doorga*, whose superior claims to the feminine graces are here manifest, in the number of arms—no less than ten—with which she is provided to exercise and display them. In six of her eight hands she holds those peculiarly feminine implements—an axe—a discus—a trident—a club—an arrow—and a shield. With one of the remainder she has seized by the hair of his head, a green-bodied monster, over whom she is treading in triumph; and with the other she is piercing his heart with a gory spear. Like Britannia, she has a Lion at her feet, who is helping her to victory over the giant Mohisator, around whose neck a snake rears itself, and threatens him with further mischief;—all politely and complimentarily intended, you might think, to show the impossibility of resistance to the power of woman! On either side are her two charming sons—Katik and Gunesh. The former is a handsome, yellow young gentleman—seated on a peacock, with a bow in one hand, and an arrow in the other. This is not Cupid—but the god of war. Gunesh on the other hand, the god of wisdom, is a fat punchy personage with four arms and an elephant's head, seated on a Lotus flower, and to the loss of whose natural or human head, his mother was reconciled by the assurance of the creator *Bramha*, that “amongst the worship of all the gods, that of Gunesh should for ever bear the preference.”

Having, then, here studied some of the *beauties* of creation, there is at hand, in an equally chaste red frame, another charming design, wherein the

children can learn the wonders of God's universe and works, by seeing at once that the earth,—which is circular and flat, like the flower of the water-lily, and 4000,000,000 of miles in circumference, having a mountain in its centre only 600,000 miles in height, on the summit of which are the heavens of Vishnoo,—is supported on the thousand heads of the serpent-god *Anantoo*:—that the serpent rests on the back of a Tortoise—and the Tortoise floats on the surface of the water! What supports this water is left to the imagination. But how much deeper could either father or mother wish the children to go in the knowledge of religious, scientific, and geographical truth, than this very natural and convenient arrangement of things?

As for their quarrellings, or contentions, if the noise has at length inconvenienced their mother, or excited *her* temper, she may have run out, and, with a slap upon the back, and an angry tug at the arm, drawn the offender within, and there left it to mump or to mope as it will. However constant her love, I fear we cannot say it “knows no fall,” nor is—

“E'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks  
That humour interposed too often makes.”

But evening now has set in, and papa has come home. No matter of what rank or profession—high or low—citizen or rustic, he, too, loves his children. Speaking of his general character it has been remarked—“His good qualities are patient endurance, suppleness, dexterity, and quickness of apprehension. The Bengalee, while he has many of the faults of wayward childhood, has, also, much of that ductility which is its undoubted privilege. He is not wantonly cruel. His kindness towards children, be they his own or another man's, is a most pleasing feature in his moral nature.” We will say nothing of his judgment. That is *nil*. He has not brought the children a picture-book—for the best of all reasons—there are none in his language, none in any language within his means; nor a substantial toy, but he has brought them some *methi*—or sweetmeats—exquisitely wrought out of flour, fried in abundance of grease, and admirably adapted to destroy their health. Possibly, also, he is a quiet man, the “husband of one wife” and free, therefore, from one of the greatest miseries of Hindoo existence—a home of broil and contest. But, I am sorry to say, the ears of the little ones have, if not at home, yet next door, or around them, long ere this been assailed by harsh, and obscene sounds, and the great charm of childhood—its virgin purity of ear, and tongue and thought, is only too likely, to be already destroyed.

—But see—our little maiden, now seven years old, is arrayed in her best, and prepared for some interesting event. Well, you think—forgetting, it may be, all I have already told you in one of my former letters, that in one thing at least the Hindoos are a prudent people: that they are not guilty of that unnatural forcing and loading of children's minds with



useless educational cramming at a time when they only should be exercising their limbs and strengthening their constitutions;—but now, at a more seasonable period, there is to be a beginning:—no doubt she is going to school.—To school, indeed!—She is going to BE MARRIED!!

Yes—papa has long been looking about for an eligible husband for his child, and it so happens that a neighbour of somewhat better means has been in like parental anxiety respecting the settlement of his son,—now at the very advanced age of nine! The boy and the girl have never seen each other—but *that* is of no consequence!—the parents perhaps *have*—and some go-between has seen the children! The respective castes of the families, of course, agree; and whether the means of the boy's father permit or not, the occasion will demand a handsome amount of gift or *purchase* money, and a glorious feast! Is the father to be rewarded for all this outlay, for which he has probably plunged himself in debt for the next two years, by its contributing to any permanent object of benefit for his child?—Not a whit. I believe that the following remarks, penned by Mr. Ward nearly forty years ago, and subscribed to by Mr. Shore ten years afterwards, is as true of the people at this moment as it was then. “The expences (says Mr. Ward) attendant on marriages are a grievous burden on this people: the rich *feel* the burden, but a poor man is overwhelmed by it; it devours in a few days the future labour of years; for a poor Hindoo almost always borrows the whole of the estimated expense at an enormous interest, frequently at 36 per cent. The borrowing system is universally acted upon by the Hindoos, and this is one of the most fruitful sources of their poverty, immorality, and misery. To defray the debts incurred at the birth, marriage, and death of one grown-up child, if the father survive him, often requires the labour of several years. The chief anxiety of a Hindoo, therefore, is not to acquire daily food for his family, but to pay off those extraordinary expenses, incurred at the call of ridiculous custom or superstition. Though several thousands of roopees may have been expended upon it, not a vestige remains after marriage by which the married pair may be more wealthy or more happy: the whole sum evaporates in show, noise, and smoke, or is squandered away in the entertainment of brahmuns and relations.”

I should here mention, however, that the arrangement I have just described is not invariable. It is, on the contrary, subject to as many changes and modifications as there are “castes”—multiplied by the variety of circumstances in worldly means—to be found amongst the people. If, for instances, we ascend amongst the Heaven-born Brahmuns, we find the very opposite practice to exist. Instead of the parent of *the boy* paying for the wife, the father of *the girl*, whose duty it is to seek for his daughter a husband of higher grade in that immaculate body, is glad to pay a dower with his child to secure her so proud and blissful a union. You would hardly believe—nor would it “enter into the heart of man to conceive,” the influence which the Brahmunic body exercises over the people—a body of men

who, it is observed, "have placed themselves above kings in honour, and laid the whole nation prostrate at their feet." You certainly would not conceive the abominations which in spite of all modern theorising and glossing over, they still keep *practically* in existence. The Koolin, or higher caste Brahmun, taking advantage of the immeasurable influence of his position—the coveted honour of an alliance with him,—may wander from house to house, or village to village—marry in every one of them—receiving, it may be, a dowry to boot—and thus become the husband of five hundred poor girls, whom he may never see again! Need I dwell upon the devilishness of such a system—a system, indeed, which I have heard some of the better minded even amongst themselves denounce as "odious." But whether their original institutes justify or not—they have been at any rate *led* to it. *It exists.* The door has long been open, and by none has it been shut. The man who practises it is not hooted or scouted. His windows are not broken: he is not in the pillory;—he is not pelted with stale eggs, or deceased kittens. On the contrary—he is, honoured and revered. He is not set down as libertine, sensualist, or "gay deceiver." He has professed no bachelorship, made no false pretences. The parents who have thus sacrificed their poor children to eternal widowhood, knew perfectly well that their son-in-law was the husband of probably a score more;—but, then, to be the *wife of a Koolin Brahmun!*—that is domestic comfort and reward enough! Whatever, then, the condition of the Brahmuns, what must be that of the millions thus influenced and enslaved!\*

But I have wandered from the marriage feast. The preliminaries referred to, although, as I have said, subject to multitudinous variations, are yet probably the most common. Amongst the class of which I am now speaking, it is more usual for the parent of the boy to *give*, and that of the girl to *receive*, than the reverse; and, generally speaking, no matter what the circumstances of the father may be,—pay he *must*, and pay he *will*, in all likelihood, very much more than he can afford. So that as I have already told you—he is from that hour plunged in an amount of debt, from which it may take him years, or his whole life, to extricate him.

In our present supposed or selected instance—poor Krishtomonee's fate is sealed—she is *sold*. But the little lady knows nothing about *that*. There has been a feast to the Brahmun and friends during the past two days at her father's house, and to-morrow there will be another at the house of her father-in-law; for to-day the bridegroom visits her dwelling, and for

\* Notwithstanding the unceremonious manner in which the people are provided with husbands and wives, which it might be supposed would obviate all difficulties, and secure to every one a partner, "Caste (observes Mr. Ward), presents such various obstacles to union, and there are so many gradations of rank by which marriages are regulated, that cases do exist in which men cannot obtain wives, nor women husbands. Still, so great a disgrace, in their minds, is incurred by remaining unmarried, that on one occasion a number of old maids were married to an aged Koolen Brahmun as his friends were carrying him to the Ganges to die!"—Could absurdity go further!



the first time sees his future wife. To-morrow she will accompany him home to his father's, and there remain on a visit for two days, and then return to her mother's. Friends also of the young gentleman's father have presented the miniature bride with fine clothes, and, it may be, some trifles of jewellery,—and is not all this enough to make her as “happy as the day is long?” Poor child, she had need to be so, during these bridal days: her time of freedom and of joy may be brief enough.

I shall not weary you with tedious descriptions of the ceremonies attendant upon a Hindoo marriage, which, indeed, to be truthful of all, would demand a ringing of endless changes upon endless “castes” and combinations and circumstances, from which you would hardly escape in less than two volumes octavo! We shall be content with knowing and saying that the ceremony is over.

In addition to her finery, we observe upon the forehead of the bride, just at the parting of the hair, a spot of bright vermillion. This is the irrevocable mark of matrimonial union, and child though she be, she is not now a mere betrothed, as the popular and very natural impression among Europeans generally is, but in very truth *a wife*—and were the boy to whom she has this day been united to die to-morrow she would, as irrevocably, be *a widow*! But, let us not anticipate. To-morrow she will accompany him to his father's house, on a brief visit to the family, and there, for the present, we will leave her.

Let us now return to her little brother. He has lost, for a while, his customary playmate and companion; but his nature, somehow, does not seem much troubled by that. I have heard a native gentleman admit and remark upon the indifference—the want of attachment on the part of Hindoo lads to their sisters,—and can we wonder? In their minds, have those feelings of tenderness and respect, and romantic regard for their sister's sex generally, which commonly mark the European boy at so early an age as to seem part of his nature, ever been sown, nourished, or called forth? Will Master Bonomálee ever show himself the

“Village Hampden, that with dauntless breast,  
The little tyrant of his fields withstood?”

Will he tuck up his sleeves, and double his fists, against the tyrant Gungáram, for wantonly breaking his sister's cart, or being rude to her young friend Miss Káminee?—I am afraid not!—I am afraid it would be very unreasonable to expect it. Who ever taught *him* that it was disgraceful cowardice to hurt a girl,—cowardice which would bring down upon him the hootings of his companions?—Whoever instilled into his mind the generous spirit which, even from their tenderest years, the nobler nurtured lads of Christian Europe imbibe from a thousand and a thousand teachings, trainings, suggestions, and examples;—inhaling it as unconsciously as the air they breathe?—Has one little Hindoo ever, in imagination, slain the cruel giant

who held in captivity the beautiful Princess; or blown the horn that shook the castle walls, and released the seven enchanted ladies?—I greatly fear that the heroines with whom the only picture *he* is familiar with, have made him best acquainted, will be either that delicate ten-armed goddess, who is taking care of herself by poking a spear into the green giant at her foot; or the lovely jet-black, or deep blue, lady *Mâhâ-kâlee*, with four arms, and her tongue hanging out, reeking with the blood of the giants she has slain—whose peculiarly feminine nature, also, is displayed by the exquisite necklace of human skulls that hangs from her shoulders to her knees,—who stands on the body of her husband, Shiv, and holds in the tender fingers of one hand a scimitar—and in those of another, a decapitated head whilst, with the remaining two she is very consistently “forbidding fears” and “bestowing a blessing.”\*

It is all very well to say that these are merely *symbolical* of this or of that mythic something or nothing of which Bonomâlee, when he grows up to manhood, may *possibly* have some mystified idea;—but in the meantime, to all intents and purposes, “these be his Gods.”† Ridiculous as some of the old and much abused stories and fairy tales for English children may have been, I believe that there were none which did not in some shape tend to the exaltation of chivalric or other generous virtue to exhibit the final reward of the good, and punishment of the bad. Nor was there any danger of the child mistaking “fairy fiction” for “truth severe.” As the poet Cowper says:—

“I shall not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau,  
If birds confabulate or no;  
’Tis clear, that they are always able  
To hold discourse, at least in fable;  
And e’en the child who knows no better  
Than to interpret, by the letter,  
A story of a cock and bull,  
Must have a most uncommon skull.”

Whether in the instance of allegory, parable, fable or story, I never met

\* This goddess is said to be only another form of *Parbatî* or *Doorga*. Having slain the Giant *Raktoo eejoo*, she was so overjoyed at the victory that she danced till the earth shook to its foundation,—whereupon her husband Shiv, at the intercession of the gods, and as the only means of persuading her to desist—threw himself amongst the dead bodies of the slain—when that innate modesty and delicate feminine nature which distinguish the goddess were so shocked by finding herself dancing upon her husband, that with surprise and shame, she put out her tongue, and became quiet,—and in this very interesting way she is represented in almost all the images now made in Bengal.

† By reference to Mr. Ward’s work, however, we find it declared, that no such liberality of construction is inculcated or permitted. He says:—“The Hindoo is taught, that the image is really God, and the heaviest judgments are denounced against him, if he dare to suspect that the image is nothing more than the elements of which it is composed. The *Tuntru-saru* declares, that such an unbeliever will sink into the regions of torment. In the apprehensions of the people in general, therefore, the idols are real deities; they occupy the place of God, and receive all the homage, all the fear, all the service, and all the honours which He so justly claims.”



with an English child who,—if in doubt, would not ask—“But is it *true*, Mama?”—or whose mind would not be as clear as that of its instructor upon the subject, when told in reply—“No, it is only a story.” He has seen his Creator and Saviour symbolized under the forms of a Dove and a Lamb; but the loveable nature of these gentle creatures he knows as well as his parent, and very soon comprehends their allusive application. He never saw his God, or his God’s attributes, pictured as a being with six or eight heads—or as a monkey—or as a four-armed woman, drunk with the blood of those she has slain—or as a red man with an elephant’s head, and four arms, apparently playing the acrobat, or conjuror with balls, spears, and battle-axes! Now the contrasted evil is, that, of all the mythic monstrosities pictorially set before the little Hindoo boy, or of the monstrous legends and fables attached to them, he does *not* in a single instance think of asking—“Is it *true*, Mama?” Were such a question even in the nature of things, or mooted accidentally, in some rare instances, his poor mother is probably just as wise as he, and could no more separate fable from fact than “draw out leviathan with a hook.” And thus the Hindoo mind is reared in that grossly ignorant credulity which devours everything, and doubts nothing, and is, indeed, one of the strong characteristics of all the uneducated millions of India.\*

To return to Bonomalee and his sister. I can find but little in the atmosphere *they* breathe to encourage those tender feelings of reciprocal attachment which every circumstance and association in Christian life seems calculated to foster and increase. The want, I maintain, will not be found on woman’s side. The affections of the heart, and their cultivation, are peculiarly her gifts and province; and consistently with this, though it be only in a *ceremony*, we find that, in a certain month in the year, Hindoo sisters follow the example of the sister of the fabled King of Death, who gave a feast to her brother, and marking his forehead with sandal powder, made him immortal. So, on the anniversary morning of this Feast, Hindoo sisters “pour milk into the hand of each brother, and repeat an incantation while the brother drinks it. Each sister, also, puts on the head of each brother a grain of rice, and rubs on the forehead of each some powder of sandal wood. As soon as this is performed, the brother bows to an elder sister; but if the brother is elder, the sister bows to him, and takes up, stroking them with her open hand, the dust of his feet.”† Very gracious, very sisterly, and very Eastern, all this, no doubt; and, on the girls’ part, I believe, very sincerely and affectionately discharged. But we find *no return in kind* from the brother to the sister!—Not even Hindoo fable appears to have reached so great an elevation of fraternal courtesies!

\* “Ward, on the Hindoos.”

† 1859. Those who have lived in India during the eventful years 1857—58, have had ample opportunities of knowing this. There was no monstrous tale—no ridiculous invention—no imposition upon common sense, that was either too childish or too outrageous to be received, credited, and disseminated amongst the people. No experience of the past or of us, was sufficient to repel the most absurd and

Well, then, Bonomálee, as I have said, has lost his sister and companion; but there are plenty in the streets, or in the village—and now, in all probability his downward moral course begins. Is he ever cautioned not to play with certain naughty boys, who will teach him to *lie*—to *cheat*—and even to *steal*? must it not, on the contrary, be admitted that the want of truthfulness amongst, at least, the lower orders of India, is a curse from which they themselves are perpetually suffering, and yet, marvellous to say, is about the last against which they seem ever to exclaim, or to fortify the minds of their children. There is a listless apathy in their minds, the inevitable consequence of a false and vicious creed of fatalism, a creed necessarily inculcating that resistance or precaution, against either moral or physical evil, are alike useless. “What must be, must be:” and their philosophy is the very counterpart of Tennyson’s “Lotus-Eaters,—

“Let us alone: Time driveth onward fast;  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone: What is that will last?  
What pleasure can we have to war with evil?  
Let us alone.”

In a laborious and well known work by Mr. Ward, (one of the talented Missionary trio I have before mentioned), “*A View of the Hindoos*,” we find several specimens of their conversations,—one of which, describing a domestic quarrel, strikes me as in the highest degree characteristic. It exhibits that Oriental eloquence of volubility, which peculiarly marks the people of Bengal, and is so illustrative of their inconsistent jumble of “wise saws” and moral reflections, with practical nonsense, their neglect of the commonest duties towards their children, whilst complaining bitterly of the consequence of that neglect—the evil conduct which they make not the slightest effort to correct or to prevent—that I am tempted to quote a few passages. The husband, you are to suppose, has returned home, and finding his meals unprepared, remarks, in no pleasant mood, that “the cooking is not yet even begun”—when thus the wife:—

“What unnecessary business have I been doing? I had first to put the house straight; then to give the children some cold rice; and then to prepare the twelve o’clock luncheon for your servants and visitors. What can I do alone? I have but two hands; I have not four hands.”

*The Husband*.—“You are unable to decide betwixt right and wrong; that

most mischievous of lies. Hence the wondrous success of that most ingenious and quickening fabrication—the “*greased cartridge*,”—commending itself alike to Hindoo and Mohammudan with equal force—and equal ruin!

An illustration of this dark credulity occurred in Calcutta long before the rebellion. Some mischievous wag whispered to some “foolish ear,” that the Doctors at the Medical College required, and were to be supplied from amongst the *ghureeb-log*, or poor—with human bodies, for the purpose of *being boiled down* for chemical or other barbarous use! Would a poor coolie be found to carry a packet, or venture near to that College for several days afterwards?—Not one!



is, which thing should be done first, and which last. My business depends on others; I must be guided by their leisure. If I delay, of course I shall not obtain my money; but that is not all, I shall be reproached. But you are a woman; you know nothing of these things: you remain in the house, eat, and sit at your ease; the washerman stands to no losses, they fall on the owner; he who suffers, alone understands the loss;—others, what do they know? When money is wanted, I must find it. He who has these burthens can understand their weight; but it is of no use revealing them to you. Prepare the food.

*The Wife.*—"You scold me without cause; you have killed ten thousand with a word: but real work is not so easy. Have I any leisure? These thoughtless children are very wicked; they mind nobody: the other day the youngest fell into the river, and after sinking several times, was saved by the favour of the gods. A short time ago, a snake bit another: and they quarrel and fight daily with other children. To follow all day such mischievous children, is to keep a herd of swine, or to lead dogs in a string. Besides me, who is there to look after them? If I leave them a day, they are like forlorn wretches left to perish in the open field. If any one else had this to do for a single day, he would throw away his garment and run away. If you have eyes, you cannot see my cares; and after working one's self to death, there will be no praise. Like a slave, I work and eat.

*The Husband.*—"I ask for my food early, that I might go and bring home some money—instead of meeting my wishes, you have raised a tempest. You resemble those who, instead of doing others good, expect a reward for injuring them. The only fruit of all this noise, that I can see, is, the day is gone. Will this uproar fill our bellies, or bring in supplies? Therefore,—make haste with the food.

*The Wife*—(very angry). "If there should be neither money nor food, what do I lose? These children are yours; this business is yours: what am I? Among whom am I reckoned? I must work—and be reproached: this is my lot; and as they sometimes ask a man, 'Who are you? I am the master of the house: Why are you crying? I have been eating bran!' In this world, the only food is, hard labour and reproach. I cannot, nor will I, either work or eat. Cannot I procure a rag to cover me, and a little food? God has given life and food too. I must pass alone through all that arises out of the actions of former transmigrations. Who feeds the unhatched young? Who supports the worm in the centre of the wood? Filth finds a place; shall there be no place for me on the earth?

*Husband.*—"Why all these complaints? Attend to the happiness of your family.

*Wife.*—"You are a man; what is it to you? You will eat and serve others; you will collect something, and throw it into the house; whether it meets our wants or not, you know nothing. I am obliged, by a thousand contrivances, here a little and there a little, to feed your family: your chil-

dren are unmanageable; they wander about like mendicants who have no home: like a guest, they come to meals, and then wander abroad. Many hands make work scarce: each traveller can carry his own staff, but if one man has to carry the staves of many, they become a load.

*Husband.*—"You are a woman; you go naked, though you wear a garment ten cubits long; you have no understanding; these are the children of the Kalee Yoog. What can be done? These children's faults are the opening fruits of your sins in a former birth: they are making you pay the debts you then contracted. You know nothing; your own body is not yours; you must cast it off; how then should the children cleave to you? See! your own teeth bite your tongue, and then you complain.

*Wife (now speaks the Mother and the Woman).*—"Let the children be good or bad, there is no merit in casting them off; a deranged person, if he belongs to our own family, we keep near us; while we drive away such a person, if he belongs to another person: our bodies, when they become a real burden, we do not acknowledge to be burthensome: if our own child is even blind or lame, we love it more than the most beautiful child of another.

*Husband.*—"You are correct—but it is very difficult to change the evil dispositions of children; a dry stick may be broken, but not bent; if a stick is bent at all, it must be when it is green; and indeed you have ruined the younger boy, by making him do the work of women; he is at once stupid and uncontrollable, rushing forward like the buffalo; he makes a play-ball even of the shalgramū; he would ruin any one; he is capable of anything; the other day he quarrelled with Ubhuyu-Churunu; he is always in evil company, smoking intoxicating drugs, drinking, and gaming;—in this way, by degrees, he will become a thief, and I shall be cast into prison as his protector. People pray for sons, in the hope that they will serve and obey them; at death, carry them to the side of the Ganges; and, after death, present the offerings for the repose of the soul at Gya: this boy" (he speaks ironically) "will do all this for me;—but, at any rate, through his wickedness, I am securing the daily offerings (of abuse) from my neighbours, who not only curse him, but all his ancestors. Who shall describe his qualities? they would occupy the limits of the Muhābharātu. He is to me the image of death; his death would be a blessing; then the family would be preserved from farther dishonour. As for the elder boy, he will keep up the honour of the family; at any rate he has obtained some learning; he has acquired the grammar, and a degree of knowledge; he promises well; weighs matters before he decides; and can lay hold of anything new that is brought before him with great facility."

Is it not lamentable that he who so well can "moralize this spectacle"—can reflect so sensibly upon dried sticks and green twigs—should be so little capable of profiting by his philosophy? But you see, his eldest son, at any rate, will keep up "the honour of the family." He has obtained some



learning, and has "acquired the grammar"—he weighs matters and is quick of perception. So, probably, our little Bonomálee's papa may be teaching him his letters and his figures—or he may at once send him to school. Yes, *he* may be taught, whilst his poor, and possibly far cleverer sister may "burst in ignorance." But of her anon. Bonomálee goes to school; not, be it understood, to any of the great Missionary or other European establishments, but to the village school, where pedagogue and cane preserve all their ancient terrors. Here, however, Bonomálee sits himself down upon the ground, and first with chalk, and then with palm-leaf and pen, and afterwards on plantain leaf, toils away at his letters and his figures. These and other introductory matters mastered, he joins in monotonous chorus with his fellows, not in reading from a book, but in repeating various sentences—at first of a simple or elementary character, but afterwards extended extracts from a variety of books, which are commonly in use amongst the schools. "*The Pleasing Instructor*," or "*Sandford and Merton*," perhaps, you think, in orient guise—or the sage reflections of "*Amurath, Sultan of the East—the Judge of Nations, the Disciple of Adversity!*" No, but as we learn, the "*Gunga Bundana*," which describes the virtues of the River Goddess! Or the "*Saraswati Bandana*," or "Salutation of the Goddess of Learning," which is committed to memory by frequent repetition, and is daily recited by the scholars in a body before they leave school, all kneeling with their heads bent to the ground, and following a leader or monitor in the pronunciation of the successive lines or couplets; or of the "*Gooroo Bundana*," a doggerel composition, containing an expression of the respect and devotion due from the scholar to his teacher; or of the "*Gooroo Dakkhina*," another doggerel composition, which in glowing terms describes the fee or reward which Krishna and his brother Bolaram gave to their teacher, after having finished their education, and which is constantly sung by the elder boys of a school from house to house, to elicit donations for their master; or lastly the "*Data Korno*," illustrating the beneficence and hospitality of Korno, the Prime Minister of Durjodhan, and the Hatim Tai of India.\*

With such a system of teaching and such books, such garbage for mental food,—we can quite understand the remarks made by Mr. Adams in his report on education several years ago, in which he says:—

"It may be safely affirmed that in no instance whatever is the orthography of the language of the country acquired in those schools, for although in some of them two or three of the more advanced boys write out small portions of the most popular poetical compositions of the country, yet the manuscript copy itself is so inaccurate that they only become confirmed in a most vitiated manner of spelling, which the imperfect qualifications of the teacher do not enable him to correct. The scholars are entirely without

\* Calcutta Review, No. IV.

instruction either literary or oral, regarding the personal virtues, and domestic and social duties. The teacher, in virtue of his character, or in the way of advice or reproof, exercises no moral influence on the character of his pupils. For the sake of pay, he performs a menial service in the spirit of a menial. On the other hand there is no text or school-book used containing any moral truths or liberal knowledge; so that, education being limited entirely to accounts, tends rather to narrow the mind, and confine its attention to sordid gain, than to improve the heart and enlarge the understanding. This description, applies, as far as I at present know, to all indigenous elementary schools throughout Bengal."

But this is not the worst, nor the whole. The most popular book in their schools, is said to be "Chanaks Slokes," or Precepts, some of which I have seen quoted, and must say, that they contain such reflections upon various matters and things, upon the value of a wife—upon the meritorious actions of a man in his former existence—and upon a variety of blessings and creature comforts in our present state, which are of a nature that absolutely forbids *my repeating them to you!* Well may it be asked, "What must be the effects of such "slokes" committed to memory in 50,000 village schools!!"\* And as if this were not enough to evidence the miserable nature of education, hitherto, at least, afforded to a rural population estimated at 40,000,000; we have the assurance of Dr. Duff, that—

"If the scheme of teaching be throughout one of dull, dry, plodding, monotonous mechanism—acting on head and heart with all the force of a congealing efficacy—the scheme of discipline may be truly characterised as throughout a *reign of terror*. Kindness, patience, generosity, love—all are alike unknown here. Fear is the first and last and only motive brought into play; punishment, the first and last and only stimulant."† This is followed by a detail of the numerous descriptions of cruel and injurious punishments which are resorted to—and reflections upon their mischievous consequences, in rendering the school an object of terror and disgust, so that a foolish mother's most awe-inspiring threat to a misbehaving child is "call the *Gooroo Mahashai* to take him to school"—a dread that leads to habits of cunning to escape its terrors, and of servility towards the master—to the rendering of many menial and even dishonest services to propitiate that dreaded tyrant; and on the other hand to a retaliating spirit of hatred and revenge against him.

Referring to the present state of ignorance and debasement of the mass of the people, the Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Halliday, in his Minute on the Police and criminal justice of Bengal, observes—"Above all things that can be done by us for this people is their gradual intellectual and moral advancement through the slow but certain means of a widely spreading

\* Tracts on the Rural Population of Bengal and Bahar.

† Calcutta Review, No. IV.



popular system of venacular education." Let but this be done, let there be a spread of Books in the language of the land,—not of doggrel poetry in honour of the river Goddess, or of Krishna and Bolaram, but of that better poetry (for be it understood these people have a love of poetry) or prose which shall teach sound sense, practical morality, domestic virtue, social improvement, and useful knowledge.

All honour to the noble Institutes of the Free Kirk—the General Assembly—and Bhowanipore, which are imparting the English language, and the light of European knowledge, and of Christian doctrine and practice, to thousands of youth of the middle classes—of all classes, indeed, belonging to the city, who flock in hundreds to their walls, dispute the open reading of our Scriptures, and the discussion of their doctrines. But let the stream also, like the generous rivers of the soil, spread about the land, and permeate all ranks, even the poorest—in the distant towns and remotest villages. "Milk for babes." Let us then "begin with the beginning." I should have more faith in a system which began with the time-honoured simplicity of "A was an Apple, and B was a Boy," when both apples and boys were depicted in the little volume, glowing in all the brilliancy of the rainbow, than in the dry stiffness of that misnamed utilitarianism which proffers the cup of learning without an atom of sugar to sweeten or commend it to the youthful mental palate. Let us have literature for the poor;—juvenile books in Bengalee and Oordoo, illuminated with well-drawn pictures;—wholesome and instructive substitutes for the wretched filth upon some of their temple walls;—let us have "Working men's" *illustrated* magazines; and tracts on domestic virtues, and social habits, and general knowledge; literature that, whilst pleasing the eye, and tempting the imagination, will meet with no opposition from the Brahmun or the Moulvie; and let them not be thrown gratis amongst the people, to be converted, probably, into wrappers for the hucksters' wares, but sold so cheap as to come within the means nearly of the poorest, whilst not interfering with any judicious distribution by the generous as prizes or presents. In the east, as in the west, people do not seem to value or respect that which *costs them nothing*, or is not made in some way *special*.

It next follows, that great numbers must be taught to read them,—which *now* the great majority cannot. You may ask—"but are they willing?"—I will endeavour to give the means of judging. It has been estimated that in the Province of Bengal and Bahar there are about *one hundred thousand Village Schools!* Does this evidence a people unwilling to be taught, or to educate their young? The *result* is only a proof that the teachers cannot *give* what their scholars are willing to *receive*; for what has hitherto been this result? It may not always be safe to judge of the whole by a part, as much frequently depends upon locality, and the *class* of people; but as an instance of the state of knowledge amongst the rural classes generally, I have gleaned from a Statistical table now before me the following facts. In eighteen

villages belonging to this district the number of families is 317, whose condition is stated to be as follows:—

Those who are pretty well off . . . . .	4
Those who are neither rich nor poor . . . . .	95
And of poor . . . . .	218

The aggregate of the households of these families is stated to be—of Men, 522,—Women 546,—Boys 419, and Girls 348. Now, of the 522 *men*, the number who can read and write is 23, and of those who can do neither 499.

Although the majority of these are not Hindoos, but *Mohummudans*, I believe that circumstance in no degree disturbs the inference, for the children of both creeds alike are sent to the village schools, and I am not aware that amongst the humble *rural* classes there is much less inclination on the part of Mohummudans than Hindoos to educate their children—after their fashion. I may also mention that these eighteen villages are attached to three missionary stations. Numbers of the young, therefore, may be supposed to be now under tuition, so that some dozen years hence, when time has been allowed to mature this rising generation, such a table as that quoted from above will be a curious and interesting document.

Well, then, willingness being conceded, you next ask, probably,—“Have they *capacities* for learning?” Upon this also you shall form your own opinion. I lately paid a visit to a School at a place called *Thakoor Pooka*, about ten miles south of Calcutta, and which owes its origin to the zeal of the Rev. Mr. Long, whose meritorious object was the education of the *lower classes*—the peasantry. Mr. Long’s plan is very much upon the Pestalozzian system,—an endeavour to cultivate the mind by aid of the Book of God, and the Book of Nature. Indeed, less by books than by objects and pictures. English however, Mensuration, History, Physical Geography, Map-drawing, Natural History, and a Knowledge of Plants, are amongst the subjects of study,—all of which information is applied to the actual purposes and pursuits of life. In the garden, for instance, the lads are made to work manually and to learn and apply their knowledge at the same time. Every branch of instruction is of course imparted through the medium of their own language. Of the intelligence and quickness of the lads at the school I certainly had ample evidence; and Mr. Long’s own experience and report is, that in capability they fall nothing short of those amongst the higher classes.

Mr. L., however, who is a very champion of the peasant, declares, that, with one or two exceptions, he has never met with an atom of sympathy in his labours on their behalf from the Brahmuns or other educated natives. Some Zumeendars having actually told him that he disgraced himself by teaching these “*poshoo*” or beasts!—and he complains that the educational system adopted by the Government is to encourage *only* Brahmuns and others of the higher classes; the nature of the studies being adapted only for those who are intended for writers, or to follow similar professions; thus evincing



a deficiency of consideration for the poorer classes, who, in point of fact, have no education offered them suitable to their wants and condition.

In one of the great educational establishments of England, the "British and Foreign School" in the Borough Road, St. George's Fields, London, I can remember many years ago seeing hung upon its wall a full-length Portrait of the benevolent King George III., and in golden letters beneath it a passage from his speech, made to the educationist Mr. Lancaster, which, as well as I can recollect, ran in these words:—

"IT IS MY WISH THAT EVERY POOR CHILD IN MY DOMINIONS SHOULD  
BE TAUGHT TO READ THE BIBLE,"

a desire you will, I am sure, say worthy of a King, and of kingly imitation.

Now, it may not be easy to teach "every poor child" in these vast eastern dominions to read the Bible all at once; but, at least, that can be done for them which is done for the poor of every Christian country before they can peruse their Bibles,—they can be taught to read simple books, to begin with;—and the question has long been at rest, I believe, whether this is not best done for the million in their own language and character: the readiest and surest channel alike to mind and heart; certainly to the mind and heart of that most important agent of instruction—*Woman*.\*

"It is," (says one writer), "in the dwellings of the people that the mind and character of the people are formed; that their physical frames are matured, their moral natures educated, their judgments guided and directed, and that their future place in the scale of morality and intellect is determined."

Here, then, it will be proper that I should tell you what measures have

\* The Honourable Mr. Shore, a strong opponent to the universal establishment of English in our Courts of Law, to the prejudice of the living languages and dialects of the Country, was equally opposed to the substitution of "our written character for the one now in use amongst the natives, and by which the intercourse of the Country has been carried on for ages." Mr. Shore maintains that the reason of the adoption of the Roman character in the countries which became subject to that power was the natural prevalence of knowledge and civilization over barbarism and ignorance, and observes, "The existence of letters among the far greater proportion of their foreign subjects is, of itself, a matter of doubt; and the little learning they possessed was confined to an inconceivable few. The Romans established schools, and favoured the study of their own language. They taught their own letters naturally in their own characters; and these, having among the mass of the people nothing to supplant, were adopted by all who hoped for promotion or advancement at their hands. Every instance of a change of the written character of a people, has taken place from one or other of these powerful causes." But, asks Mr. Shore, "Why should we imagine that the natives of India will give up their character for ours? They are not illiterate savages; hundreds of thousands among them are able to read and write, and carry on their public and private concern through this medium, like all other civilized people."

As to the utility of such a change here, Mr. S. remarks, "To write oriental languages in the Roman character may be useful to students in Europe who have no tutors at hand to teach them the pronunciation; but it certainly will be no advantage whatever to the people of India." Nor, he might have added, to the resident European—to whom it is, certainly, much easier to study and to understand the language in its character, than in one almost smothered in what Mr. Shore calls "a halo of dots," dashes, points, and disacritical marks, that puzzle the eye and mystify the understanding.

been taken in furtherance of this great object of education by our rulers; who, it would appear, in establishing schools for the higher and middling classes, hoped (as it must be admitted they had good right to do) that, through the instrumentality of the pupils who obtained in these institutions a thorough acquaintance with the knowledge of the West, that improvement would descend to the rural *vernacular schools*, and its benefits be ultimately felt by all classes of the population.—But this hope has not been realized.

The truth is, that in such a chaos of ignorance, superstition, prejudice, and evil influences as India presents, the efforts of the Government may be said hitherto to have been little more than mere experiments. On Lord Bentinck's first entering the field, he found everything purely Oriental; \*—Sanskrit and Arabic, the classical and not the vernacular languages of the Hindoos and Mohummudans, were almost alone encouraged, and at considerable cost of money. Oriental colleges had, we learn,—partly as a measure of policy, and partly from their bearings upon the vernaculars,—been originally founded as a means of conciliating the people—more especially the Pundits and Moulvies, by showing respect for their ancient learning, when the students who held scholarships were supported!

Lord Bentinck had no sympathy with this system, and determined that all the funds appropriated for educational purposes would be best employed on English education alone. The system thus changed, causing, of course, vehement opposition and dissatisfaction, though it withdrew the stipends, did not exclude Oriental learning, nor the vernaculars. But English now became in the ascendant, and seemed, indeed, to threaten not only the learned Oriental languages, but the vernacular tongue likewise! A re-action soon took place. Lord Auckland restored “a measured degree of encouragement” to the Oriental languages, and made it clear that so soon as a sufficient number of good vernacular class-books had been prepared, the vernacular must be mainly relied on in any wide system of national education for the great mass of the people. The plan of combined instruction in English and vernacular then rose in favour and strength, and has continued in practice to the present time, and in the *lower* provinces with success. In the more remote districts, where English influence was less felt, the results were less favourable; and, indeed, in process of time, the minor English schools in the North-West provinces were abolished—the study of English was confined to the colleges at the principal stations, and a system of purely vernacular education was organized on a wide basis.

In the year 1844, the subject of village schools in Lower Bengal again received the Government attention. Mr. Adam's suggestion of improving the existing indigenous schools, though not actually rejected, was laid aside. It was thought to be “almost impracticable,” and, from the enormous number of schools, that it would involve great expense. Subsequently,

\* “Review of Public Instruction.” By J. Kerr, M.A., Principal, Hooghly College.



under Lord Hardinge's administration, it was determined to establish a certain number of Government village schools in the several districts of Bengal, Behar, and Cuttack, in which, whilst serving as models for the mass of schools, sound and useful elementary instruction might be imparted in the vernacular language. Accordingly, in 1845, thirty schools were opened with 999 scholars, who were made to pay a small fee of one anna (a little more than a penny). In the following year, the number of schools was seventy-one, and of scholars 1730. During the next two years the number of schools continued about the same, that of the scholars attaining to 2095;—but in the following year the schools became reduced to fifty-eight, and finally fell to forty-three.

In short, for some reason or another, success did not equal expectation.—By some, the want of success was attributed to the schools being “too purely vernacular for the actual state of the people.”—It was thought that those classes of the community whose minds were alive to the advantages of education, were desirous of acquiring some knowledge of English along with vernacular instruction. “The proximity of an English school” (says Mr. Kerr), “generally acts as an extinguisher to a purely vernacular school.”—Some of the local officers reported “that the cry for English was universal, and that the boys at school thrust their books into the masters' hands, and insisted upon being taught English!”

I can hardly suppose, however, that *these* lads were from the purely rural or humble ranks. I believe it is admitted that the anxiety for English arises generally more from the very natural desire of improving worldly prospects, than from any abstract love of learning (though this is not wanting when once its gratifications have been enjoyed), and the youths in question were most probably of those classes whose minds (or rather the minds of their friends) might thus have been acted on. It may be very true, that a good vernacular education can provide employment for more than would be benefited by an English one; but either they think otherwise, or that the English is more fruitful. But in reference to the really humble classes, it seems more probable that one cause of failure at least was that “the means of obtaining an elementary vernacular education *already existed* to a considerable extent in private schools throughout the districts,”—and that at very small expense. The native schoolmaster is content with trifling remuneration; and Government thus became a rival to the *Gooroo Mashai*, or village pedagogue—who, probably a Brahmun, would have easy work in resisting encroachments on his interests. Another cause of failure was supposed to be the inferior class of teachers employed—the salary being no temptation to those of better capabilities.

But it is now thought that the whole thing was crude in its arrangements or plans. There was no proper system of supervision; no encouragement held out to the pupils—and no training of teachers!

About the time, however, when these things seemed most discouraging,

they received a new and important impetus. The attention of the authorities at home was opening not only to the general subject of the education of the masses of the people, but to the evident success which had attended Mr. Thomason's plans of vernacular education in the North-West; and to this success, and the necessity of adopting similar measures, Lord Dalhousie and the Supreme Government drew the attention of the Government of Bengal. Hereupon, Mr. Halliday—to whom so much is due, and who was appointed Lieut.-Governor in 1853,—took up the subject most earnestly and vigorously. He formed a scheme of vernacular education for Bengal, which enlisted private enterprise by what are briefly known as “grants in aid,”—that is, sums of money granted in aid;—provided for a supply of vernacular teachers by the establishment of three normal schools in Calcutta, Dacca, and Hooghly; enlisted the services of the village teachers; established *Scholarships*, which afforded a small allowance of money to enable boys to pursue their studies longer;—and, lastly, appointed three inspectors, and a staff of sub-inspectors, to visit the Mofussul, for the purpose of examining existing schools, and encouraging the establishment of new ones.

These measures, together with an encouraging educational dispatch from England, which oiled the wheels, as it were, of the great engine, have given considerable impulse to the cause of Education, and led to the production of a large number of useful vernacular works.\* What is now wanted is *money* to extend the system, and a relaxation of the stringent conditions of the “Grant-in-aid” rules,—rules which, it is complained, demand that a people who require still to be taught the value of that useful knowledge of which they are destitute—should meet *half the expenses* of its acquirement.—This, it is thought, really bears some parity with the suppositionary case of Government intimating its intention of appointing no Police, unless the thieves paid half the expense of its establishment.

But, in truth, I believe that the great and comprehensive work of Education is not for *any* Government *unaided* to accomplish. It may lead the way—nay, be the great instigator, and pioneer;—may lend its countenance, and the indispensable aid of its pecuniary means, and be the great dispenser of rewards,—carrying out strictly the rule which insists that every one holding the humblest office in its employ should be *able to read and write*,†—but if the educated natives, those who have so freely *received*, will not as freely *give*—if they either *will* not, or do not know how to, impart to their poorer countrymen some portion of their own light, it is for Europeans, as far as in them lies, to do it for them, and to claim its honours. It must be in short, in great part, a *work of love*—not of authority; and unless the gentle and kindly influences of private persons be brought to bear upon the people's minds and

\* 1859.—It is most remarkable that during the great mutiny very little injury was done to the vernacular schools in the North-West provinces; and that last year, ere that mutiny had ended, 700,000 volumes of vernacular school books were actually printed in those provinces.

† This has partly been carried out both in Bengal and the North-West provinces.



hearts,—the rich as well as the poor, in order to bring about the *one great paramount object*—the education of *girls* as well as boys—all the learning of the schools, as far as the real interests and education of the latter are concerned, will be but *labour lost*. They may be smart,—they may be clever,—they may be capital arithmeticians; but as moral, intellectual, and civilized beings, all their learning will, I fear, be as the idiot's tale—"full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." In short, I cannot but regard any system of education which either attempts, or is compelled, to exclude *Woman* from its benefits and its agency, as little better than a house "built upon the sands." To the Missionary—the Planter—the Mofussul residents, and, "though last not least," *their wives*, who live amongst the people,—who can talk to them, counsel them, and exercise a variety of kindly influences over their minds, backed by the aid of books, and other appliances at their disposal;—to these agents we must chiefly and hopefully look for that one great blessing—that one great "Grant-in-aid," to the rural millions of India,—Education.



VILLAGE NEAR MULNATH.

So our little suppository friend, Bonomálee,—whom we left at school,—has profited but little, you may guess, by his village education. What he might have done, and what he might have become, had one of these Government schools reached *his* village, or had his better fortunes carried him to one of the great institutions of Calcutta, are far other questions. There you might see the *capabilities* of the native mind fairly tested and developed; and, I will give you in her own words, the impression made upon an English lady, who for the first time, visited Dr. Duff's institution:—"But what struck me most was the eagerness and animation with which they answered; the intelligence and mirth which sparkled in their eyes whenever anything amused them, and the pleasure with which they listened to what

was said,—I never saw a teacher on such delightful terms with his pupils.”—And again:—“Every one was alive, awake, eager, happy, and intelligent; certainly they are a most quick-witted, intelligent race; they understand a word or a sign in a moment, and prick up their ears at everything that is going on.”\*

But our present little subject must be content with his rhyming acquirements respecting the gods and goddesses, with such scraps and crumbs of morality as he may have picked up from the “Slokes;” and, lastly, with his arithmetic. In this he will probably excel, for the quickness of the Bengalee in accounts is generally most remarkable, whilst at the same time he may barely be enabled to sign his name in writing! If he continues in the fields he may retain his rustic manners and simplicity,—labour at his plough,—supinely bend to the position to which he believes himself born, and to the influence, authority, and demands of those he equally believes were born above him;—borrow heavily for some extravagance of a week,—be fleeced by the Muhájun, or others, and half starved for the rest of the year;—and so, with ill-fed body, and worse fed mind,—with affections deprived of the innumerable and invaluable influences that flow from those first best teachers, mothers and sisters, educated, honoured, and unshackled; seeking his only comfort in sleep, and his only luxury in smoking,—he lives on;—and in all this you have ample material, as far at least as *men* are concerned, of the “short and simple annals of the (Indian) poor.”

Let us now step back for awhile to Bonomálee’s married sister, Krishtomonee. It is but little more, poor girl, that we shall see or have to say of her. She has returned from the house of her father-in-law, where we left her on a visit, to her parents. There it may be for two or three years more she may assist her mother in domestic duties—in cooking—cleaning—or if there be any children younger than herself, in nursing. The poorer she is now, I might almost say, the better; for she can at least breathe the air;—the richer the worse!—for she must keep to the house or its enclosure.

At length—perhaps in her eleventh or twelfth year, young Krishtomonee (for she does not change her name at marriage), is summoned to her husband’s dwelling in his father’s house. Amongst the Hindoos, it is remarked that marriage seldom at first separates children—that is, sons—from their parents; and that sometimes grandfathers with children and grandchildren in a direct line, amounting, probably, to fifty persons, may be found in one family. Here then, ere she has actually ceased to grow, the child of eleven or twelve years of age enters on the matrimonial state.—And now, what is her lot? If, by good chance, her husband likes her, and, by still happier chances, they like each other, all for a season may be smooth enough; but, alas! alas! if it be otherwise!—And surely, where unions are without choice, even without mutual consent, this is far from unlikely. If, even as an object of attach-

\* “Life in the Mission, Camp, and Zenana.” By Mrs. Colin Mackenzie, p. 42—43.



ment, her condition be that of domestic servitude and drudgery,—without equality,—the condition of one who during the day is neither friend nor counsellor,—not even companion to her husband, *with* whom, nor before whom she does not even eat; in the presence of whose friends, it is possible, she does not even sit, if she can appear at all,—if all this be so, what is likely to be her state when, in place of being loved, she is discarded and disliked?

Mr. Ward (from whom I have so often quoted, and the general correctness of whose authority few, I believe, question), declares of these early marriages that they are “seldom happy;”—and, indeed, he draws so sad a picture of a state of things consequent on the system, that, writing as he did so long ago, I am not disposed unnecessarily to repeat what I cannot from my own knowledge endorse, and think it not impossible may at this time be in some degree modified.—At all events we need not drag our little friend through the worst suppositionary mire.—Things may not prove so bad. It is quite possible, however, that ere twice twelve moons, we may see she is a mother. Her little one is scarce eleven years younger than herself!—And, oh! glorious luck for her—it is a boy! Had it been otherwise, and the like ill-fortune oft repeated—or, still worse, probably, had she remained childless,—she might in eight years have been supplanted by *another wife*, whom the father, or the elder brother of her husband would probably have sought on his behalf; and from this fruitless source of contention it seems doubtful on whom the greatest share of misery may fall—the early wife, or her husband! From this calamity, as we have seen, Krishtomonce is at present safe. But how passes time with her? How fares it, through weeks and months, with the “child-wife” and child-mother?—Very drudgingly, it must be acknowledged, if she is poor—very stupidly and uselessly if the reverse. In the first case, what with nursing, and all its cares;—bathing, and all its ceremonies;—cooking, spinning, and other domestic duties,—scarcely a moment of the day may remain unoccupied; and, on the other hand, if her husband prove in better means than to require this sordid slavery, what are her resources? She cannot read,—nor can her friends,—nor use the needle:—what remains to her but dreamy listlessness, idle gossip, or dead *ennui*?

But mark the gleam of light already “dappling the drowsy East” of Woman’s life!—light said to be only the return of that which, immemorial ages ago, shone brightly on *Hindoo* women! A talented and respected native friend has written a paper, the effect of which certainly illustrates well the marvellous gulf between theory and practice;—showing, in fact, that some of the interpretations of Hindoo laws and traditions affecting women have been gross *mis*-interpretations or corruptions,—utterly inconsistent with each other. The Institutes of Menu, he contends, inculcate that a daughter should be considered as the “highest object of tenderness;”—that the same ceremonies after birth (excepting those pertaining to the sacrificial thread), belong to her as to a son;—that she should be nursed and *educated* with

care (the term "educated," my friend assuring me, having really its full English signification);—that, albeit their education is not enjoined in the Shasters (and their reading the *vēds* is certainly forbidden), many Hindoo females have yet obtained very considerable literary proficiency;—that "it is better that a damsel, though marriageable, should remain at home till her death, than be given in marriage to a man void of excellent qualities;—that the power of choice is not entirely taken away from her;—that the sale of daughters by Koolens is expressly prohibited;—that the rigid confinement of women to the house is wrong, and did *not exist in former times*; that women even practised riding, as the Mahrattas do to the present day;—that they enjoyed many civil and even political rights, as in other nations;—that, whilst Menu authorizes a husband to correct an erring wife, if he chooses, "with a twig,"—and another sage in opposition, says "strike not, even with a blossom, a wife guilty of a hundred faults;"—that the *Tantras* inculcate great respect to a wife, and that the mild and respectful expressions used in addressing a woman,—the regard shown by "making way for her," and rendering her one of the first objects of hospitality; the lessons inculcated for honouring, and keeping her in a contented and happy state—the dedication of one's life for her preservation,—the killing in her defence being thought "no crime," but justified—are, says the Essayist, warming in his theme, "sufficient evidence of chivalry having once brightened the social horizon of India, and smoothed the speech, the behaviour, and the feelings of man, with her talismanic spell!"—He quotes the learned Dr. Wilson also, who says:—"It may be confidently asserted that in no nation of antiquity were women held in so much esteem as among the Hindoos;" and, finally, declaring that the practice of immuring women was introduced into the country after the Mohummudan invasion, partly from imitation and partly from fear,—he exclaims,—“though the cloud of Moslem oppression has checked the evolutions of her harmonizing influence—an influence still pervading the manners of the Rajpoots and Mahrattas—every support that she receives from the progress of civilization will work as magic in dispersing its surrounding gloom, and cause a diffusion of her genial beams!”\*

Remember all this is from a Hindoo gentleman, who assures me that, amongst the families of his own acquaintances—of course, the higher classes, who, indeed, have nearly all, in these days, received an English education,—he believes that the great majority of the females *read*.—And this despite the direful calamities which we are told are denounced against the woman "who shall dare to aspire to the dangerous pre-eminence of being able to read and write!"—With such practical precedents then, the champions of woman's intellectual advance have no reason to despair.†

\* From a discourse delivered at one of the meetings of the 'Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge.'—By Baboo Peary Chand Mittra.

† The following verbatim is from a respectable Hindoo, a post-master in this district, who was requested to furnish information, and his views, respecting the education of women in Bengal:—"Although



But, for the last time, let us return to the humble Krishtomonee. No liberal and enlightened husband prompts or teaches *her* to read. So, with the care of her child, the ceaseless round of house-toils, and the chatter of old women, whose mental and physical eyes have alike only darkened with age,—with these must the days of her pilgrimage come and go;—under such influences must her thoughts be elevated,—her mind *expand*! Take an example or two of this elevation and expansion:—If she doubts her husband's affections, she may secretly administer to him a medicine obtained from some venerable sybil, to cause his affections to return,—as the charm-wrought melodies of Nourmathal brought back those of Jahan Guin!—Should he remain long from home, she may try some other specific to hasten his coming;—and, to ascertain if he be well or ill, is dead or is alive, she may consult the wisdom of a *witch*, who with a winnowing fan, judges from its motion as to the exact condition of the absent husband!

But, despite love-potions and witches, calamity is at hand;—Krishtomonee's husband is sick and dying. He has been seized with *cholera*. Does she fly for the doctor?—or apply some well tried and approved medicine suited to the disorder? Alas! she knows nothing of these things—they have never been in her path or province; but with a woman's deep and true devotion, she will fan him,—and shampoo his limbs,—and burn some fumigating gum or herb, or smear his chest with turmeric or other nostrum, with which the counsel of the village crone or barber has provided her, from sources of Brahmunic aid, or incantations,—all this she will do,—alike eagerly and vainly. Perhaps the case reaches the ear of a *Sahib* in the neighbourhood;—but it may be some eight or ten hours after its commencement, and then, even his sympathy and the aids of true science, come too late: the patient sinks. Poor Krishtomonee is a *widow*!

And now what is her fate?—or rather, but for the philanthropic courage of a British Governor-General, what would it have been a few years back?

education was allowed to women at a very remote period, and some of them were most renowned for science,—as, for example, Nilabatty,—the notions of the people underwent an entire change, and female education and liberty at once withheld; from the time perhaps that India began to groan under the Muhamoden yoke. Fallacies even prevailed whether women would not be early widows if made to learn. But on the auspicious transfer of the country into the British hand, its liberal rulers are exerting to revive female education; and Mr. Bethune, whom we must ever recollect with reverence, spared neither bodily labour, nor pecuniary means to carry it into effect. Owing to his philanthropy, institutions have been established at places for female education, but, alas! their benefits are not availed. Some are debarred to educate their girls for poverty, others sacrifice their interest to the dictates of prejudice.

"In the lower order of people in Bengal, excepting the Christians, it is scarce to find an educated woman; among the middle class, it is only one to one hundred that can read. But in the higher class, the number is considerable. Here the women, exempted from menial duties, have leisure and longing to study; and, assisted in their course, generally, by their learned consorts, are seen to make rapid improvements. Compositions of this class of women are now and then published in journals, and the matters they contain are so excellent and interesting, that they do credit to the sex, and evince their sublime notions of religion and morality.

"Sokoontola, Nobenary, and other female biographies, are their favourite books of study."

Why, in all likelihood, to have been *bound to the dead body of her husband, and burnt alive upon his funeral pyre!*—Let either man or woman of the Christian West contemplate this horrible idea without shuddering, if they can!

You may well ask, whether an institution of such hideous barbarity could really belong to the golden age of Indian "chivalry," to which my native friend has referred us? Assuredly not: it is believed to be of later introduction,—at some more than ordinarily dark period of Hindooism\*—when the fiery sacrifice was supposed not only to beatify the devoted wife, but to remove the sins of the husband, and carry him with her to heaven!—Thanks to Lord Bentinck,—a man dear for ever to India and humanity,—this revolting practice no more stains the soil of the Orient. Woman may, indeed, still suffer all the privations and discomfort of Hindoo widowhood—misery which, by a cruel ingenuity, seemed really to have been *intended* should drive her to the flames;—but she cannot now be barbarously *murdered*. Nay more;—a further and a mighty step is gained on her behalf. The chain of *eternal widowhood*—the source of misery and crime, to which it is impossible for me here to give expression, or convey to you the most faint idea—has been snapped asunder. The legal, if not the superstitious restraint upon her re-marriage, has been removed;—and Krishtomonee, and thousands more, virtually widows, (although, it may almost be said, scarcely ever virtually wives), are at least free to re-marry, whenever the spirit of enlightenment and of purer thought shall have sufficiently gained upon the *men* to sanction their freedom. But, in what I am about to add, you will, I trust, see promise of further triumph; of a "light" destined at no remote date to pierce the prison-house of woman's heart, mind, and soul;—to awaken her dormant powers, and restore her to that position from which barbarous policy and priestly craft have so long and cruelly displaced her. Not only has the work fairly begun, it is progressing with an earnestness and, consequently, a success, which fully justifies the warmest hopes of its designers.

There is at this time in Calcutta the Government '*Bethune*' School, with sixty female pupils of good caste,—in other words, of the respectable classes, whose acceptance of the proffered aid is in itself a triumphant omen of the spread of its good results to *all* classes. In another school (established by the Rev. Dr. Duff, of the Free Kirk of Scotland), are seventy pupils, also of good caste; who now, I am assured, "read and write admirably; know geography, arithmetic, needle-work,—and, I rejoice to add,—portions of the Bible. Connected with the General Assembly of the established Church of Scotland there are two such schools—one at the end of the town, containing sixty pupils; another at the south, with the like number; and a third, upon the Dum-Dum road, for the poor, or lowest classes, containing about forty scholars. Besides these, and the girls' school attached to the London Mis-

\* The practice is evidently of late date, and is no more a part of Hindooism than the persecuting spirit of the middle ages was part of the Gospel of love."—*Household Words*, No. 404.



sionary Society's Institution at Bhowanipore, and two or three Orphan Refugees' in the city, belonging either to the Established Churches, or the Free Kirk of Scotland, there are smaller Bazar schools for children; while, in the Mofussul, at various Mission stations, several female schools have been established with good success. Let me state that in all these, except the Refugees' Institutions, where the children are principally of Christian parentage, the language of the people is the medium of instruction.

That the darkness of ignorance and superstition *must* eventually fly before the light of European knowledge, and Christian principles, with the all-powerful help and agency now at last set free, is abundantly manifest. But, until the densest portion of Hindoo and Mohummudan bigotry is thus rolled away, and men's eyes can bear the fixed lustre of truth and knowledge, let us not be unreasonable, and marvel at the shortness or weakness of their vision. Let us be patient, till educated *woman* can enter the arena, the lamp of knowledge in her training hand, and take the great enlightening and softening part in the work of human culture assigned to her by "Nature and Nature's God!"

In all that I have now told you, you may remark that I have spoken almost exclusively of the *Hindoo* population of this gigantic land, or rather, indeed, of its Bengal portion. But there are *twenty-five millions* of Mohummudans in India; and although, as I have intimated, a great number of the *poorest*, or the rural classes of these, are so mixed up with their Hindoo fellow-labourers as, in social habits and appearance, to be half amalgamated, millions of the orthodox, the prouder Moslems, are as distinctly separate as the Christians themselves. Of our Mohummudan fellow-subjects, therefore, —their domestic lives, habits, and customs,—their women and children, and the means and prospect of their enlightenment, I might have related much that would be interesting;—but *time*, and some consideration for your patience, now forbids. I can only say with the poet:—

"What is writ, is writ;—  
Would it were worthier!"



A ROOKER, OR WATCH HUT.



KAPURDANGAH MISSION CHURCH.

## LETTER XII.

*September 30th.*

I HAVE been visiting a Mission Station—that of Kapurdangah on the Boyrub river—and as I think you would like to know something of Indian Missionary labours, I intend to occupy this letter by telling you what I have seen and heard.

Although there are no stationary Missionary doings within about thirty-five miles of Mulnath, Kishnaghur, within which district Mulnath lies, is one of the principal fields of Missionary operations in Bengal. My picture of Mofussul life, therefore, would be unjustly wanting if I omitted all mention of so interesting a subject.

The very commencement of these operations in this district—and I have no reason to suppose they were any worse than elsewhere—might have been sufficient to damp the ardour of any pioneer less zealous than the Rev. Mr. Dear; and affords a strong illustration of the necessity of a vast amount of patient endurance on the part of those who labour in the work of Christian conversion, and of enduring patience on that of its supporters and lookers on. I believe that the experience of every Missionary in India would echo the remark. I question whether I could have fallen upon a Mission field



where more of honest zeal would be found in exercise than in this of Kapusdangah—and it is echoed there. It would just be unreasonable to expect it otherwise, without the aid of special Divine interposition.

In truth, a Missionary requires to be a man with gifts and qualifications of no ordinary character. He should be physically suited to the climate—to the endurance of heat and exposure. He should possess an aptitude for the acquirement of languages; without a familiar acquaintance with at least one of those spoken here, he would be no better than the deaf and dumb. He should be as learned in the Theology of the Hindoo and Mohummudan as of the Christian. In the language of a recent talented author—"He must not only possess the requisite qualifications, but their possession must be apparent. He must not only appear well acquainted with his own side of the question, but with that of his antagonist; otherwise, the Hindoo has the sagacity to know that at any rate his antagonist has not been able to see his system as it is seen by himself;"\*—and, after all this, he must very probably be content to set up his abode near some poor village, where all his scholastic acquirements and erudition may be doomed, like a Bude light in a dungeon, to be spent upon a population of poor, ignorant peasants, who would hardly dispute that the moon were made of green cheese, if those in authority bid them to believe it.—But there may be one or two learned Brahmuns or priests at hand, whom he may either seek or be sought by,—and if unable to answer these gentlemen, amidst, it may be, numerous listeners, in an argument, what becomes of his influence over the poor?—He must neither have, nor *seem* to have, his equal. Thus, though armed to do battle with the mighty, he must be satisfied to spend his strength amidst the weak and humble,—and amongst them, exercising an unbounded store of cheerful patience, be content with the smallest amount of fruit for his labour.

But after all, who can call that fruit small which forms the germ of future generations of wide-spreading families.—Neither, I venture to think, should so little value be set on what are called mere "nominal Christians."—What are nominal Christians?—They are those taken away from the heathen or Mohummudan, from whom a spreading branch is thus cut off that will yield no more "daughters to the mother tree." They are those who, outwardly at least, regard and respect Christian doctrine and Christian habits; who thus not only abandon a variety of either open abominations or immoralities, but are under the civilizing influence and restraint of Christian teachers and practices, and whose *children* are thus brought up under Christian education, in no danger or dread of parental opposition or discouragement.—Is nothing gained in all this?

But to return to Mr. Dear, under whom Missionary operations were first established in Kishnaghur. His commencement was well enough. He was joined by seven families of a peculiar sect of people—seceders alike from

\* "The Land of the Veda," by the Rev. Peter Percival.

Hindooism and Mohummudanism—called Kortabhoja, who, worshipping the Creator only—not being idolators, and having no *caste*, offered fewer difficulties to contend with. But Mr. Dear had soon to experience disheartening elements in the character of the people—those of worldly feelings and deception—a deception fostered by two hypocritical Catechists, who, going about amongst their countrymen, encouraged them to join, under the assurance that they would, in consequence, all become Zumeendars and rich men!

Shortly afterwards, a famine, consequent upon a severe inundation (referred to in one of my former letters), fell upon the land. This was in the year 1838-9, and Mr. Dear, making an appeal to the people of Calcutta, obtained by subscription means with which he assisted the poor of his converts with money and food.—This was soon known—there was corn in Egypt—and the flock of professing Christians became amazing! Two hundred and sixty-five families were added to the body. Their attendance was regular, and their zeal apparently unimpeachable. The Missionaries and the Bishop (Wilson) were alike deceived. The good Bishop came up into the district—baptizing and confirming many, and grants of money continued to be made to assist the poor in their difficulties.

A beginning so auspicious was regarded by many as a kind of second Pentecost,—but, alas! no real foundation was there! It became apparent that the inducement—and who can wonder?—was the temporal aid afforded to them; and on this aid being, in process of time, withdrawn, conversions to Christianity almost ceased! The character of a great part of those who had already joined the Christian body, also, afforded little satisfaction. But there was this consolation at least—they could not go back,—but remained as a basis for future operations. Before this, however, when the great increase of Christians at Kishnaghur, numbering between two and three thousand persons, appeared to encourage and demand more teachers, three Missionaries were appointed to that district. Of these, one was the Rev. Mr. Krauss, who, in 1840, established the Kapusdangah mission and schools, and built the church,—at first on a small scale,—which was subsequently enlarged to its present dimensions, and this was completed in 1849—the year in which the good man died.

Mr. Krauss was succeeded in that year by the present incumbent, the Rev. F. Schurr, and if this gentleman's experience of the people has not been better than that of others, it is certainly not from any lack of the needful qualifications, which probably he possesses in more than ordinary degree. If the work of conversion were an invitation to the gold diggings, people might marvel at the smallness of immediate results; but instead of the facilities of temptation, there are the most powerful barriers which the springs of the human mind can interpose. The labours of the medical man are often difficult and arduous enough—yet he toils only to restore men to *what they were before*, and that with their hearty concurrence;—the



preacher to make them what they *never were* before—and, it may be, very much against their inclination. Mr. Schurr is wisely not discouraged. Though in all candour he speaks not highly of the religious condition of his people, there are, he says, a few really sincere and good converts and consistent Christians, amongst whom *the women preponderate*. As a moral people Mr. Schurr considers them nearly equal to any body of nominal Christians. Even their heathen neighbours bear testimony to the greater truthfulness, reliableness, and general moral conduct amongst them than amongst themselves! This surely is no petty triumph; for, considering the character of their countrymen around them, in whom Mr. Schurr says he finds no truthfulness—no morality—and of the evil influences by which they are thus unavoidably environed, many allowances must be made, and too much should not be expected.

Labouring, then, to make the best of what he finds amongst them, and rejoicing in whatever amount of Christian vitality they may possess, Mr. Schurr is content, with the great Missionary leaders, Dr. Duff, Mr. Lacroix, and their excellent and zealous coadjutors, to rest his larger hopes in the *education of the young*—the rearing a generation of native Christians. In this interesting work Mr. Schurr is assisted by his domestic partner, who, like her good husband, brings not only zeal, but that most valuable commodity a lively cheerful temperament, to lighten and sweeten the task of study; and to her care are, of course, largely committed the training of those whom I am free to think by far the most important and influential recipients of knowledge—the *girls*. It is almost vain to educate boys if they go home to an ignorant mother. It is like giving the child a fine fur cap to cover the head, and leaving the feet bare to perish in the snow from cold. What good thing will not prosper under the genial fostering influence of a respected mother?—and what mischief and blighting chill may not arise from an ignorant and prejudiced one?—Men may educate boys' *heads*—but it is woman, in her character of mother and sister, who moulds their *hearts* and tempers, and their most powerful and enduring inclinations and affections. It is the *root*, not the leaves of the sapling that the gardener waters.

A wholesome sight it was to see the girls around Mrs. Schurr, cleanly and comfortably clad, plying the needle and thread—recalling visions—not of—

“Fingers weary and worn—  
Eyelids heavy and red;”

(for, let the poverty of the Indian peasant be what it may, I fearlessly assert it has no misery parallel to *those* horrors—the inheritance of the tender—the educated—the sensitive and unfortunate)—but visions of English domestic life, and a future restoration of woman in the—towards her—*barbaric* East, to her rightful position in the scale of humanity.

The schools are divided into three departments: the boys (whose school-room you may observe on the right of Mr. S.'s dwelling)—the girls, who are

located on the other side of the house—and the infants; to which latter the poor are in many cases glad to send their little ones, just to be free of them whilst they attend to their field labours. A marvellously amusing, and, of course, hopeful little assembly they formed,—in the midst of whom, about sixty in number, like an Eva amongst a tribe of Topsy's, the little white face of Mrs. Schurr's own child was seen—as though leading the chorus and acting as a sort of fogleman in their exercises.

The system pursued is identical with that existing in Europe—teaching by amusements and music; and Mr. Schurr has adopted what is called the phonic system, or teaching letters and reading by sounds, which (he says) the children quickly pick up, and readily understand. Scripture texts and stories, lessons in names of objects in natural history, and the like, are varied by little hymns and mimic descriptions of rural and other occupations, conveyed by song and action—healthful exercise alike to lungs and muscles. During one of these, so successful were the little actors in their imitative performance of an approaching storm, that, fairly deceived, my thoughts had run to hat and saddle for escape from a soaking, ere I discovered the wind, the thunder, rain, and lightning, in dancing feet, and a bright cloud of laughing eyes and faces.



KAYCHOANGAN BIBHUT HOUSE.

I am no admirer of "hot-house culture," as the injudicious and unnatural forcing of infants' minds, to the detriment of body and mind together, has been aptly termed, but am led to believe that the system here, from its character, which is intended rather to amuse than to impose, and the brief period during which the children are detained, is free from being obnoxious to the charge.



In the boys' school, conducted by Mr. Schurr, assisted by monitors, are about sixty scholars, varying in their ages from about four to fourteen years. In that of the girls, who are of the same ages, there are not less than eighty! All are pretty regular in attendance—but the girls are most tractable, amenable, and *more satisfactory in their acquirements!*—Such were Mr. Schurr's assurances. Without doubt it is to the girls we must look for the regeneration of India!

The Bible—history—geography—grammar, and arithmetic, are taught to all who are old enough; and needlework, crotchet and the like, of which they are fond—to the girls; and as a most valuable adjunct to all these things, *Music* by note; for in addition to his other acquirements, Mr. Schurr, who is from Germany, possesses the talent of his countrymen for that delightful and humanizing science, and hence is enabled to refine the taste of his scholars—to gratify their feelings, and, by instrumental and vocal help, to aid the solemnizing yet cheering and ennobling emotions connected with the worship of God.

Truly, a Missionary to India can hardly be too clever—for, as the only teacher—it may happen, the only being of superior intelligence near to the poor, he will be applied to under every conceivable circumstance or difficulty—just as I have shewn you the Planter may be. He—the teacher—is supposed to know, and to be capable of doing everything. He must not only minister to their spiritual, but their temporal wants and bodily ailments. He must be not only their minister and school-master, but their doctor—their lawyer—arbitrator, adviser, and defender in all their worldly and domestic affairs. There is nothing, in short, which is supposed foreign to his mission.

Of old and young there are, it appears, at the present time, four hundred and thirty-seven Christians residing in the village of Kapusdangah. Of these you will be surprised when I tell you that more than nine-tenths were formerly of that race from which the least teachable people would have been expected—the Mohummudans. Indeed, I find, from a statistical table just shewn me, that in seventeen villages attached to the three neighbouring Christian Missions of Kapusdangah—Bhullubpoor and Ruttonpoor, there are three hundred and seventeen families, of whom two hundred and ninety-six were formerly Mohummudans; and the rest, only twenty-one in number,—Hindoos! This disproportion might seem the more remarkable from the fact that the total population is probably divided into about equal numbers of Hindoos and Mohummudans; but the simple explanation is, that whilst the former people are hemmed in by Brahmuns, and the influence of that hydra "*caste*" on every side, there is probably not a Moulvie, or Mohummudan priest, to be found within a day's journey, to exercise influence over his co-religionists, and hence with neither learning nor zeal, and wearing their creed loosely about them, they are naturally more open to conversion or change.

A neighbouring Brahmun priest very candidly confessed to Mr. Schurr,—“We believe—and so do our people also—that the religion which you teach is true; and if you were to speak to these people now, they would believe you; but we tell them *not* to believe what the Sahibs say—and we have them entirely in our power!” Their thralldom is indeed most perfect; and the power of the Brahmun priests unlimited. It was but a short time back that a girls’ school was established in the village of Ruttonpore; but it had not been in existence more than four days when, by the power of the old Brahmons of the place, it was crushed and abolished! With the slavish adherence to the narrow-minded prejudices and customs of their forefathers—or as though dreading the mighty engine of innovation which it would let loose, there really seems to be nothing more antagonistic than the education of women. Here and there, however, a noble exception may be found. There is at the present time an aged Brahmun Zumeendar in the village of Koorool-gatchea, near to Kapusdangah—who, at the instigation of Mr. F—— here, is endeavouring to establish a school for girls; but so considerable is the opposition by which the old gentleman is beset, that it is yet very doubtful whether he will succeed. It is from the *old folks* that opposition is chiefly experienced.

As a body, Mr. Schurr considers the Hindoos by far the most intelligent and accessible. Unfortunately, however, the higher intelligences are almost confined to that section from whom nothing can well be expected—the Brahmons, whose superiority in appearance is of itself nearly sufficient to identify them—they who are all born priests—the officiating portion of whom, dependent entirely on their priestly authority for their means and their position, have naturally the most powerful worldly incentives (in addition to the most fiery zeal in defence of their ancient faith and dignity) for the most strenuous opposition to the spread of Christianity. It was but lately that some Brahmons in the neighbourhood of Sylhet, conversing with a Missionary in that neighbourhood, actually and frankly told him,—“The priests’ business is *our* business;—you are welcome to make Christians both of us and our people, on condition that *we are made Priests*, and paid as you are!” Zeal sat loosely here, you see, and worldly interest predominated.

Amongst the lower orders of the people, I have not observed that there is any difference as to intelligence;—but Mr. F——, whose experience and field of observation are so extensive, assures me that in point of *energy* the Hindoo ryuts, speaking of them generally, bear no comparison with the Mohummudan. In this respect, therefore, Mr. Schurr’s convert material may be found not without some advantage of character.

Walking through the village with Mr. Schurr, I remarked in several of the huts an improved appearance of comfort and cleanliness, and a sprinkling of greater nicety and cleanliness in dress. In addition to this, one could feel the satisfaction of being regarded not as a tiger or a boar, but as a fellow-mortal, whom neither married matron nor village maiden were afraid to look



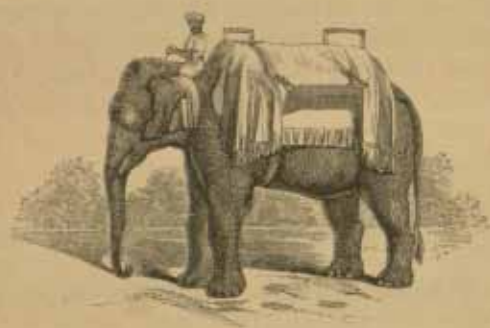
upon. The fetters of ignorance—the darkness of seclusion, and the barbarous nose-rings—fit emblems of domestic slavery, were alike exchanged for the pure free air and light of liberty.

The number of Christians in the Kapusdangah Mission, I have said is 437. Of these 120 are men; 137, including 41 widows,—women; 92 are boys, and 88 girls. Of the men, 32 are cultivators of the better class—not labourers. Of day labourers, who cultivate small quantities of land, there are 46. Servants, connected in various ways with the Mission, 12; and o. those whose families are there, but who are themselves serving elsewhere with what one of Mr. Schurr's little boys very innocently, but very graphically termed, the "*Police Brutation*," there are 13.

On the whole, the condition of the Christian people, I gathered, may be looked upon as certainly in some degree better than their Hindoo and Moosulman neighbours. This can hardly fail to be so; for, in addition to being saved the extravagance into which Hindoo and Mohummudan festivities and ceremonies would have led them, the thoughtful care and intelligence of their friend and pastor has introduced amongst them an admirable scheme by which they are saved more than half the loss attending advances from the Muhájun. A *private Muhájunee fund* has been formed amongst them, from which advances for seed—food, and rent, are made to members of their own community, at less than *one half the interest* charged by the regular money-lender. Such has been its success that the fund, which was begun with a sum of 148 Rs. as a nucleus, has now increased to 608 Rs., the whole of which is distributed in re-loans for the season, and a small portion *in support of widows*, with other poor persons, and of the establishment in charge of the fund.

The necessity for this loan or advance system being apparently inseparable from the condition of the people, who are thus kept entirely in the hands of those whose desire is alone to benefit themselves, it is a pity that this self-sustaining plan I have just described, cannot be followed by Planters also in aid of their Ryuts. The enormity of scale on which it would require to be conducted, with its risks, and,—saddest difficulty of all,—want of proper or reliable agents in the people, are the opposing obstacles,—and the necessity of the Ryuts being first freed from present liability to the Muhájuns, with whom it is believed that *all* are actually more or less in debt!

But when the intellect of civilized man can girdle the earth with a wire, and hold communion with the Antipodes, what good thing is there which, where the heart stimulates the head, cannot be accomplished by degrees?—I yet trust to hear it confessed that the zeal of *all* Christian Planters, in endeavouring to improve the condition of the poor, and so commending their own creed, is only equalled by that of the Christian Missionary in his double labours for their temporal and spiritual welfare. Let the one but *plough*—and the other *sow*—and who shall see the end of the reaping?



ELEPHANT EQUIPPED WITH CHARJEMUL.

### LETTER XIII.

*Mulnath, October 24th.*

ONE of those heavy squalls which are generally looked for, and not unfrequently experienced at this time of the year in Bengal, often spreading wreck and calamity about the neighbourhood of the Sand-heads, and extending thence probably for a hundred and fifty miles up the river, has been succeeded by one of those serene calms and refreshing atmospheres which are so peculiarly acceptable in a climate like this, and so delightful in our Mofussul. With this little burst of tempest the rainy season appears to have closed, leaving the country, which was, as I informed you in my last, already greatly inundated, now in many parts completely deluged. The river, overflowing its banks, has in several places united its waters with the adjacent lakes and nullahs, so as to render such portions of the country un-recognizable, and the roads, even if their position can be found, impassable for horsemen. The first part of our journey, therefore, (for I was accompanied by my host from Sookságur on this occasion, was performed upon an elephant.)

Elephant-riding, though not painful, must to a weak or sickly person be fatiguing in the extreme. The pace is a rapid walk, partaking of much of the roughness of a horse trot, without its regularity. It is a succession of uneven jerks, to which it requires some little time sufficiently to accustom a person to disregard it. Much depends, however, upon the character of seat. The *Howdah*, although it enables the rider to sit with the face forward, and



thus to bear the action in the most familiar direction, by its great elevation increases, of course, the extent of motion, whereas the padded seat, called a *Charjumba*, by fitting closely to the body of the animal, has less violence in its action.

Seven miles of the road being thus accomplished through rough and smooth, the *charjumba* was exchanged for the saddle at the village of Nuellee, where horses were in waiting for us. The appearance of the country, ever pleasing, is at the present time beautiful in an especial degree. The earth, nourished with the past three months of rain, now teems with luxuriant vegetation. Every tree and shrub of the jungle has put on its brightest and richest of green, and most abundant covering. Wild flowers of every kind diversify the hedge and enrich the margins of the pools and ditches, now literally carpetted with rank chickweed and vegetation resembling moss.

A smart ride of thirteen miles—a mere constitutional to a regular Mofussulite, but always a “breather” to those not in constant practice, brought us to Mulnath, which was partaking of that increase of beauty that the season and its prolific vegetable and floricultural productions could not fail to confer upon it.

Amongst other bloomings which distinguish the present month here, I find the *Kâpus*, or cotton plant, offering its ripe and bursting pods of milk-white down. The reason of this, our Bengal plant, not forming a more important item amongst the export commodities of India is, it appears, its being too short in the staple or fibre for manufacturing purposes. Whether, however, with the application of science and care in its cultivation, it might be improved so



KÂPUS, OR COTTON PLANT.

as to add a most valuable article to Indian commerce, is just the question now occupying some attention. It was tried, I am told, at Dacca; but without judgment or spirit, and the result was not very satisfactory. Its cultivation is thought more promising on the Bombay side, where two or three experimental farms produced some very good cotton, but at an expense that would scarcely tempt a speculator to cultivate to any extent. The article, too, is bulky, and consequent on the great distance it would have to be sent, and the badness of roads, its transit would be difficult and expensive. But all these difficulties, it is believed, will vanish before the all-conquering locomotive; and when that “iron car,” that yokes no “red dragons” to its front, careers triumphant through the land, neither need we, in the words of Mr. George Thompson, some years back,—“shudder to think of having

to employ a thousand men to carry us to Delhi in a box six feet by three," nor with "bullocks trudge their weary way along the jungle path, leaving cotton behind them on every bramble."

There is a forest tree also, called the *Simul*, or the giant cotton tree, which flowers about April or May, and yields another description of cotton. Though, like the *Kapus*, its fibre is too short for manufacturing purposes, it is soft and beautifully silky, and valuable for the stuffing of beds and pillows.

We have now arrived at that period when what are called "the cold weather sowings" have taken place; some of the fruits of which, as the tobacco, mustard, linseed, sesame, having been reaped either before or about January, I have already shown you. Of others, which I had not then the opportunity of seeing, a few are now springing into luxuriance with a rapidity known only in a soil so marvellous and prolific. Rich and varied indeed is now the clothing of the fields. Here an extensive and dense bed of the *Teel*, or Sesame plant, now about three feet high;—there a lighter sheet of



TEEL.

the more tender-looking and "sober hued Urhur," already spoken of; its lanceolated and delicate stalked leaves, quivering to the lightest airs that blow: further on are beds of the low creeper-like *Kuláces*, of which there are three kinds, called *Más*, *Teekree*, and *Moogh*, differing but little in appearance from each other; and beyond are thick clusters of the towering ripe *Mésta*, or



TEEKREE.

hemp, and more valuable than all, waving sheets of the ripe *Amun Dhan*, or water rice.

The *Kuláces* just named, two of which—the *Más* and *Teekree*,—you have here before you, are species of pulse, which in their marketable state are called dalls, and are extensively used as food both by man and beast; as likewise are the products of two other plants, which I find are also called *Kuláces*—*Khessaree* and *Mus-sooree*—now under cultivation in the vicinity of this place.



MÁS KULACE.



TEEKREE KULACE.

There is another, and a very important, though insignificant looking little



leguminous plant I must not omit from the sowings of the present period. This is a vetch, called Chunnā—the grain of which known as *Boot*, or grain, forms the food of nearly every horse in India. Its cultivation in this neighbourhood is very limited, but in the country around Patna, whence



KHESARIA.



MUSSOORIE.



CHUKKA.

our greatest and finest supplies are received, it is extremely extensive,—consumption being, of course, enormous.\* At this time, also, Wheat and Barley are just sown, and being valuable crops, though on a very small scale, are found within enclosed grounds.

Lastly, amongst the seedlings of the present month, I may again refer to the Mustard plant, of which I have named two kinds—the *Rye* and *Rye Sursa*. Of these, one yields the Mustard of commerce, and the other (the *Sursa*), the Mustard Oil, as I have already mentioned; and here, having more than once made reference to *Oil Seed crops*, is a fitting time to show you the last labours connected with them—the manner in which the oil is expressed—a process wherein the same primitive simplicity is exhibited as in all other operations amongst the poor of India.

An oil-man's mill, of which the pencil will here best convey to you an impression, generally occupies an entire hut, the full space being required for the "blind career" of the poor patient, hood-winked bullock, that slowly, and for three hours at a time, pursues his monotonous and winding course of labour.

The body of the mill, termed *Ghannee Gatch*, is formed from the solid trunk of a Peepul or Banyan tree, turned or smoothened into



MUSTARD PLANT.

\* 1858.—The ordinary price of grain varies from fourteen annas to about one roopee eight annas per mun. To Koor Singh in Shahabad, and his fellow destructionists all over the country, is now owing the increase of that price to about *three roopees*!

shape, and firmly fastened into the ground. The upper part, called the *pirree*, forms the mortar, having a cap, or hollow at the bottom, within which, as in a socket, the lower end of the *jhant*, or pestle, works. The bamboo *helledear*,



THE OIL MILL.

fastened diagonally at its side, is for the purpose of stirring the seed, and keeping the cup and pestle constantly supplied with material. The head of the pestle is fastened into an oblong block of wood, called the *dhekka*, the lower end of which is drawn down by ropes to a bar of wood (the *muttoom*) made fast in a stout plank. One end of this plank, you observe, works in a groove around the body of the mill, and the other is loaded with bags of earth, or heavy stones, in order by their weight to press upon the head of the seed-crushing pestle. To the neck of this pestle, the *jooal*, or bullock's yoke is attached,—and from this yoke, near the animal's head, runs a bar of wood, or *kan-nooree*, to the plank to which it is made fast, like a trace to a carriage, and by this the plank is drawn round and the mill turned,—the whole apparatus being bound together with rope and string with a rusticity of manner that defies even the pencil to make intelligible. The oil on being expressed runs out from the cup or mortar through an opening in the base of the mill, and is seen dropping into a cocoa-nut shell—the eyes therein serving as a funnel through which the oil is deposited in the vessel beneath.

And by the aid of this simple instrument is about one-sixth of the human race supplied with nearly every description of oil which the twenty-sixth part of the earth produces.



Chief and last amongst the gatherings of this time—indeed, I should say of the season, for in some parts it is not cut until December,—is the Amun Dhan, or water rice, so often spoken of; which, having suffered nothing by the inundations, is, during the present month, reaped and stacked.



A KIMA, OR STACKING GROUNDS

With the "October sowings," of which I have already disposed, end nearly all that is noticeable in the affairs of the Planter. There is but little of this sowing about Mulnath, the land being so high, but in the neighbourhood of Sooksagur and elsewhere it is extensive. So—with the close of manufacturing—of sowing—of storms, and of rain, the Planter once more feels his liberty, and, as I have told you, is either visited by his friends or neighbours, or visits them. Amongst such visitings, in which I have sometimes accompanied my friend here, was one—after a picturesque ride of fourteen miles, (for such is neighbourship in *our* rural life!) to the out-factory of Roodapore, of which Mr. S—— was then the superintendent. The day was made agreeable to us under the roof of his comfortable bungalow, which differs from all other buildings of this character I have yet seen, by having a snug airy little room as an upper story, in which Mr. S—— during hot weather had a delightfully cool bed-room. Since that time Roodapore has changed hands, and my friend Mr. M——I having become its manager, and imbibing the spirit, and following the example of Mulnath, has established a school for the education of the poor lads around,—upwards of one hundred and fifty of whom have already put themselves under Mr. M's tuition. He is anxious to model his little academy on something of the plan of the Lancastrian system

—to which, indeed, Bengalee schools generally, in their mode of whole-class teaching, make some approximation.



BUNGALOW BUNGALOW.

*November 4th.*

I FIND my host at this time busily engaged in improving the arrangements and appearance of the garden. Three days ago he determined, though with many compunctions, upon felling a very large Tamarind tree, which being too near, and shrouding a very fine specimen of the Sago Palm, was injurious to its growth, and to that of everything else beneath its shade. The gardener and his men accordingly set to work on the task of hewing through its trunk,—but unfortunately the Mālee's intelligence for once forsook him;—he omitted a rope to the tree head to guide it in its fall! Hearing from a distance a sudden and unmistakable sound of "falling greatness," I hastened to the spot—the question suggesting itself, as I went, whether the tree had fallen in the right direction.—Alas!—it had fallen in the *wrong*—crushing beneath its gigantic arms and rich foliage the very Palm its removal was intended to preserve!

Yesterday morning, after our usual ride, we were superintending and labouring at the work of clearing the wreck, to ascertain if any hope existed of saving the Palm, which did not appear to be entirely destroyed, when



Mr. F—— received tidings of worse cuttings and fellings than those of trees and branches,—the fellings of fellow creatures by fell man! A serious Dacoity had taken place the night before at a village called Akipore, about four miles hence, and in the Thanah, or police division of Raneeghat. It occurred about twelve o'clock, but the intelligence did not reach here until nine in the morning. The horses were immediately re-saddled, and instructions being left for the doctor to follow in a palkee, we rode off to the place.

Here was a new scene in Mofussul life,—one unfortunately too frequent. Well might the poet *here* exclaim:—

"Save me from their simplicity who look  
In villages alone for life serene,  
Blameless and pure! Vice stains the purling brook,  
And dances masked upon the village green;  
Pan's boasted pipe can utter sounds obscene,  
And savage fury wield th' Arcadian crook!"\*

The term Dacoity, I should explain to you, means a burglary,—but Indian burglaries are seldom unaccompanied by either murder or violence; and the present was no exception to this generality, as we were soon met by people on the road who informed us that one of the unfortunate victims was already dead.

On our way we passed a little village called *Mautechara*,—pointing to which Mr. F—— remarked,—“One of a couple of well-known Dacoits resides there, and it would not at all surprise me if he has been concerned in this affair.”

Upon arriving at the place,—a very comfortable, decent-looking village,—the quiet, rural and picturesque aspect of which seemed ill in accordance with deeds of violence and blood, and might have been supposed to contain little to tempt them for *gain* sake,—we were led towards a large brick house, against the roof of which a tall and freshly-cut bamboo had been placed, and there left. By means of this ladder, the joints of its small branches left about two inches long to serve as steps, a gang of (it was said) forty or fifty ruffians had noiselessly effected their entrance by the roof into the house. Sounds of lamentation from within (for Oriental women are loud and vehement in their grief,) filled the air; and, on dismounting and entering the court or yard of the dwelling, surrounded by a great crowd of the villagers, we found the body of the murdered man lying upon a mat on the ground. It was that of Baboo Prem Mookerjee, a very respectable and influential person—the head man, in short, of the place. The inhuman brutes, in order to “squeeze” their unhappy victim, had done so literally, by rolling a bamboo over and jumping upon his body. Internal injuries were of course the result of this cruel treatment, from which, after vomiting blood, and lingering a few hours, he died. There was a spear wound in the thigh,

\* “Town and Country,” James Gregor Grant.

and two severe sword-cuts,—one across the palm of the hand, and the other between the fingers, which had no doubt been received in an endeavour to defend himself. The deceased was a very fine-looking man,—in the prime of life, much respected and gratefully regarded in the village.—“When our crops failed” (was the spontaneous testimony of the poor people around), “his golahs were always open to us. We have emptied them, yet he never asked us for money or price; now they have murdered him, and what shall we do!”

We now proceeded to the upper part of the house, where beds, pillows, and clothes were lying in all directions steeped in blood, and in our passage passed an unconscious infant, sleeping on a cot, from which its poor father had arisen only to be butchered. In the adjoining room lay the second victim,—a stout and remarkably fine-looking man, younger brother to the unfortunate Prem Mookerjee. He had secured a sword, an old family relic, and made a manful resistance against his assailants—wounding some of them, and cutting through at a stroke the staff of a spear aimed at him, fighting in short for his life, until felled by a blow upon the head from a lattey, or quarter-staff,—which is generally loaded with iron, or with brass-headed nails. He had been left for dead. We found his relations dressing a frightfully swollen and aggravated wound in the head with turpentine!—an application in which the Bengalees have so ignorant and strange a faith. Forbidding what they were doing, and substituting, after cutting off his hair, cold water applications until the doctor’s arrival, we were glad to find the poor fellow was in possession of his senses, evidence of which he afforded us in the burst of something like angry reproach, which in subdued voice escaped his lips upon seeing us:—“What kind of Raj is this, when such things can be done, and people cannot go to sleep in their houses without being murdered!”

Next to this poor fellow lay the third, and fortunately the last victim to this outrage,—a nephew of the murdered man’s;—a youth about nineteen years of age, who had received a severe wound from a spear at the lower part of the head, which his relations had managed to stanch with plaintain leaves and cloths.

A survey of the house now showed the havoc which the savages had made during their work of plunder. Doors, trunks, and boxes of all kinds had been split open with axes, and strewn about the floor; when at length, having secured their booty, they made off with upwards of two thousand ruppees in cash, besides a variety of valuables in the way of jewellery and ornaments, which they had taken from the poor women of the family. In their retreat they carried off the sword which had been used against them, but left behind an axe, a woodman’s heavy *khoral*, and three spears—one being the head of that which had been struck off in the contest.

We left the place a little before ten o’clock—up to which time no Darogah or other official had made his appearance. Mr. F——, therefore, addressed



a note to the magistrate of Santipore; but amidst that large mob of people, many of course connected with, and all claiming an interest in some way in, the poor murdered man, or his family, not a voluntary or willing messenger was to be found; and Mr. F—— had actually himself to offer a reward as an inducement to a man to carry the letter! The very manner in which an English note is frequently carried, at the end of a split twig of bamboo, in reality, I believe, to keep it from the danger of a soaking in fording rivers and lakes, seems typical of a quarantine-like horror of the missive, that may, in such a case as this, bring a calamitous visitation upon a whole village! The fact is, that these Dacoitees would appear to be *frequent*; but such is the dread that the people have, as I have already told you, of a visit from the Darogah and his people, that if they can *hide* an occurrence of the kind they will most assuredly do so. It is only when some extreme outrage has occurred, such as this,—for “murder will out,”—that the crime is necessarily reported to the magistrate. The only reason assigned for these things not occurring in the houses of Europeans, is the far greater noise and excitement which would immediately and certainly be created—endangering not only full detection of the perpetrators, but the safety of their whole fraternity. No very great compliment, you will say, to ourselves!



This morning we again rode to the scene of the Dacoity, where we found the Darogah and his men. The former appeared a very respectable intelligent man—one who it was difficult to bring the mind to suppose could be one of that corrupt body I have so frequently abused. There are exceptions, no doubt, to all rules, and this, it is possible, may have been one.

Whilst engaged talking with the Darogah on the house-top, he suddenly stopped, exclaiming,—“There’s Mudāree!—he has had a hand in this,”—and hastily stepped down. “The very man,” said Mr. F——, “I was telling you of!”—directing my attention to a dark and powerfully-formed man, with short black beard, and desperately ill-boding countenance, who with all imaginable coolness—the cries and wailings of the bereaved widow and other female relations ringing in his ears—was walking about the court of the house below; his hands behind him, and his whole demeanour that of an inquisitive and sympathizing neighbour, who had stepped in to enquire—to lament, and to condole!—In a few moments Black-beard was on the ground, a pinioned prisoner; as was also a second and yet more rascally-visaged fellow, who with Mudāree had been recognized by one of the wounded men, and had with equal audacity, and at the same time, ventured into the premises! Two other men, also, have been found lying wounded in a neighbouring village; so there seems every probability of this brutal outrage not going unpunished.\*

\* Mudāree was subsequently convicted (as principal in the Dacoity), and hanged at Kishnagur. Whilst on the scaffold, he said,—“If it had not been for F— Sahib, I should not have been hanged

November 15th.

A bright and beautiful sky, added to a delightfully serene atmosphere, tempted me at an early hour to walk abroad this morning. Taking the road by the river side,—“Mulnath Grove,” as I have taken on myself to name it,—my attention was directed to a horse upon the other side of the river, grazing on the low bank at the water’s edge.—“You’re as venturesome as the poor Jillia-Wallahs (thought I); but not claiming their exemption, you’d best beware of your heels!”—At this moment, a neigh from amidst a group of stray horses, pensioners and village ponies, almost at my elbow, aroused the careless grazer. But mind—I’m not upon my oath as to the precise character of that neigh. I do not profess to be so learned, or so nice of ear, as to determine whether the sound partook more of what we might associate with the snorting charger, the rude and fiery war-steed, or with the gentler feminine nature of my lady’s ambling genet. ’Twas enough—he was a social horse; and all the terrors of the Echamuttee, and the dangers of the Hellespont, were alike indifferent to him,—

“Fair play he car’d na deil’s a boddie,”

for them all,—he would not graze in solitude; and straightway walked into the water. “Ah me!” I involuntarily exclaimed, standing still, “that neigh has undone ye!”—and so thought a group of poor villagers now watching his fate. Scarcely had he got twenty yards from the shore, when the long black head of an alligator was seen to rise little more than as many feet from his tail! Alas, poor horse—you’re no better than carrion now! But, happy unconsciousness! he knew not death was at his heels, and swam with all the vigour and cheer of life before him. “Now do thy speedy utmost,” Bobbin, or you’ll come worse off than Tam’s mare, for hair is indigestible, and those dreadful jaws will never be contented with thy tail—long as it is. But now the horrid brute gained upon the poor horse, and the chase was no longer a jesting matter, but a painful sight. The beast was close upon his prey. One shot would have driven him to the bottom,—but the house and that help were too far off. What I lacked in gunnery, however, the people around me possessed in experience. With many amiable minds, even in the

to-day. But I have some money owing to me in the villages near Mulnath, and if you will ask F—Sahib to collect it, he will, I am sure, do so, and see it given to my family. He is a good man, and I know he will see them kindly treated.” The wretched culprit denied the present murder, but acknowledged to three or four previously. During the execution of his request, which was, of course, complied with and fully accomplished, the unhappy wife and son came to Mulnath, and a sad and marked resemblance to the bandit father was observable in every feature, and the singularly forbidding expression and bold demeanour of the boy. The meaning of Mudáree’s remark, I may explain, amounted simply to this,—that, in his opinion, but for Mr. F—’s presence, or interest in the matter, either so much zeal would not have been shewn for his apprehension,—or so much difficulty have existed in the way of his escape.



civilized or educated world, I fear it would have been a drawn question between humanity and the love of sport—whether the alligator should go without his breakfast, or the horse his life;—but these poor villagers had enough of “My Uncle Toby’s” disposition in them to lean to the weaker side. Albeit the poor animal belonged to none of them, but was indeed the property of the poor fool, the philosophical beggar of Mulnath, and had been transported to the other side of the river because he was in some way a trouble upon this,—their sympathies went with him, and they instantly set up a shout. You may wonder to what end—what good? The neigh of a thousand horses, or the yell of so many jackals, I believe would have done no good; but the alligator, at first too eager to be thus baffled, or to relinquish pursuit of his fast-winning chase, now, in another moment, after another shout, stopped short in his career, and with one more cry from the bank, to my astonishment, fairly turned tail! Fifty Minié rifles, and as many of Colt’s revolvers, all levelled together, could not more effectually have saved the poor horse than the cry of these half dozen poor peasants—nor half so strongly spoken in evidence of the supremacy of that being to whom God was pleased to grant by intelligence “dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

Just at the end of “the Grove,” facing the little market I have mentioned, and within a few feet of “Alligator ghat” is *the Ferry*. A rude affair is a Mofussul Ferry-boat. It is nothing more, in short, than a couple of common Dingees, or fishermen’s boats, lashed together, with a platform of planks over both, covered with a bed of straw and earth to afford standing-room for horses and cattle when crossing. This particular ferry-boat being the property of the Factory, is of course always available for the Master’s use, but at all other times the boatman plies his craft on his own account, and charges half a pice for the passage.



FERRY BOAT.

I am reminded by this Ferry, and the picturesque and shaded spot upon the other side, its place of disembarkation, of an accident, not less serious than extraordinary, which befel my respected friend there since my first visit to this place, and had nearly robbed Mulnath of its master, and the poor of their friend and benefactor. Having occasion to travel to a distant out-station, it chanced upon the morning of his journey that he mounted a new saddle and defensive furniture belonging to it, recently received as a gift. He had crossed with his horse by the Ferry, and was in the act of adjusting in his holster one of the pistols, ere mounting, when, by some

accident, the trigger was caught—the weapon fired—and the discharged ball entering at the right side of the stomach, and passing down through his body, lodged in the back of the leg just above the knee! That he was not taken up dead, you will think marvellous enough; but that, with no medical aid within thirty miles of the spot, he should have recovered, you will think far more so. Picked up immediately, however, by the people about, he was



VIEW AT THE FERRY.

carried home. There, most fortunately, our friend Mr. S. (the "Koomer Sahib") was at the time staying. It was then eight in the morning. Instantly mounting a horse, he galloped off towards Kishnaghur, which place he reached in three hours,—communicated the intelligence to Dr. A., who almost immediately mounting his horse, joined him in his return journey, and the two riders actually reached Mulnath by two o'clock in the afternoon! Mr. S. (exhausted, and hysterically excited) had thus ridden sixty miles in six hours, a feat in horsemanship (upon an Indian *May* day, be it remembered!) which I think would not be considered a trifling one even in a bracing climate, and by those who profess to do such things for wagers. One hardly knows which the most to admire,—the herculean task of Mr. S. or the skill of the doctor, who after at least half such a ride was capable of instantly performing a delicate and important surgical operation.\*

\* 1858. Crescent, the noble and thorough-bred animal, ridden by Mr. S. in this terrible journey, broke down when in sight of Mulnath, and was never again ridden. She lived for some years after in free quarters at Roodapore, and had children and grandchildren.



Some time previous to their arrival, my friend's Bearer, endeavouring to afford his wounded, and, as it was supposed, dying Master relief, was gently shampooing his limbs, when he suddenly exclaimed—"Oh, sir, I've found the ball!"—which, producing a slight protuberance at the back of the leg, sure enough he had done—as it was thence, upon the Doctor's arrival, cut out. The extraction of the ball, however, was but a small part of either the patient's cure or suffering. Portions of flannel and linen carried in by the shot, and which were not all extracted for many months afterwards, had, in addition to the serious injury done by the ball in its course, produced so much inflammation and suffering that full twelve months elapsed ere complete restoration to health was effected.

November 25th.

Whilst sketching in the Grove yesterday morning, my ear caught the familiar sound of "Mabood"—and, turning round, found my old friend—or



THE GROVE, MULKITH.

as he, with his accustomed vivacity and happy contentedness, familiarly introduced himself—"Toomhara pogla adnee," ("Your Fool")—profoundly sulaming at my side. As usual, he had been in great trouble—very great trouble,—and now he wanted service! What service, and what work did he know? Oh, he knew no work;—all that he wanted was some place in which there was no other work than to sit and to praise God! But then (I

observed) he was a rich man—the owner of a horse. Oh! that was not *his* horse—that was God's horse! “You see” (he replied to the question as to how he came by it, laying down his staff as usual, and assuming the quiet gravity and tone of voice of one relating a matter in confidence), O——B——, of Akipore, where the Dacoity took place, gave it me for God's sake. He promised me, if he escaped, he would make me a present, and I was to pray for him. So when it was all over, he gave me this horse!—but what use have I for a horse!—No, that is God's horse;” and this, you will be prepared to hear, was his pious theory of the animal's escape from the alligator. He laughed at the idea of an alligator being able to injure a horse that had been an offering to Heaven!

Yes, his tale, it is believed, was true. O——B——, strongly suspected at the time of having instigated the Dacoity from motives arising out of an old family feud, was tried as being *particeps criminis* in the affair, and with all the depth of superstition pertaining to his creed and class, fostered in ignorance, and now excited by fears, he had been content to seek the aid of this poor Fakeer, as a supposed religious mendicant, albeit known to every little boy in the village as a madman. He is evidently greatly improved, however; is far more quiet—cleaner in his appearance; and with these



SHEPHERD'S HUT.

improvements, there seems also an amendment in his worldly affairs,—for riding round the lake this morning, and passing through the village of Panchpottah, where he now resides, we stopped at his hut, and found him the possessor, not of a useless horse, but of one of the finest cows I have seen in Bengal.

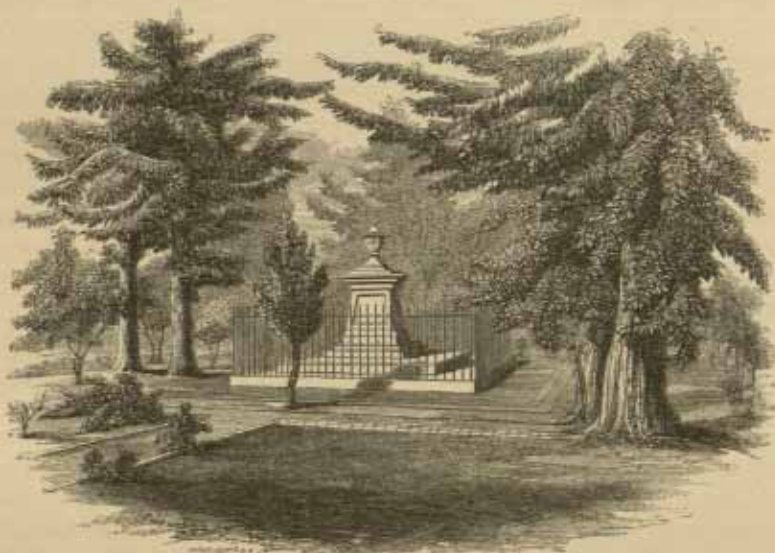


My stay at Mulnath is drawing to a close, and with it I have reason to believe, with regret, the last of my truly gratifying trips to its happy abode—its healthful atmosphere—its picturesque scenery—its agreeable life and interesting doings;—trips which the kindest and most friendly attentions were sufficient, without aid from the natural charms of the place, to render very delightful. How far I may have conveyed such an impression of the place, and its associations to *your* mind—or any corresponding interest in *reading*, to that which I have experienced in *writing* about it, I know not. We are, I am aware, too apt to suppose that what may have particularly pleased ourselves—or excited our own interest, must create a like feeling in the minds of others,—forgetful of the distinction between the substance and the shadow—the pleasures of our own experience, and the mere history of other peoples.

However, I have exhausted every substance and shadow also—ransacked (as far as time and opportunity have permitted) every nook and corner that could afford material for pen and pencil likely, in my imagination, to afford you interest or amusement. To me there is not a spot *without* interest. Every inch of the ground, from its association with so many gratifying hours has become connected with the affections. There is but one spot, indeed, not calculated to recal in my own experience some pleasurable association; and yet that has a charm to which none other can lay claim; and those pleasurable associations also which are aroused in the mind by contemplation of virtues that adorn the heart—endear the persons, and hallow the memories of the good. It is indeed hallowed ground, from which I have not hitherto ventured to lift the veil. In taking final leave, however, of the varied features of the place, I cannot resist the temptation of glancing at this, which from its seclusion is far less likely to attract attention unsought, than to interest the feelings when found. It is sacred to domestic affliction, and we will approach it with reverence.

Entering the garden from the rear of the house, and walking down the main path which skirts the lake, encircled on either side by choice shrubs and flowering trees, that divide and ornament a little maze of narrow paths, the eye is attracted by a cluster of remarkably fine and lofty Debdah trees, that appear to grow on the margin of the lake, and cause a slight deviation and graceful curve in the line of the path. A thick-set hedge of the Kisto Chooru, or . . . . ., yet further deepens the shadow, and screens the water of the lake from view; but, induced to diverge from the greater path into one of its narrow and winding branches, and pursuing its curves for about twenty yards, you are suddenly surprised and awed by finding that you have entered within a small parterre, or inclosed garden, laid out with that neatness and good taste which you would expect from the feelings that prompted, and the delicacy which guided and guarded the ingenious arrangements of this chaste tribute to the affections. In the centre of the quadrangle,

around which are beds of flower-plants—jasmynes, and small cypress trees, and neatly formed paths, is a *Tomb*. It bears the following inscription :—



SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF  
 CHARLOTTE,  
 THE DEARLY BELOVED WIFE OF  
 JAMES FORLONG,  
 BORN THE 11TH NOVEMBER, 1820,  
 AND DIED ON THE 13TH MARCH, 1844.

TO ALL THE HIGHER QUALITIES OF A WIFE AND MOTHER SHE ADDED A  
 DEGREE OF GENTLENESS AND SWEETNESS OF DISPOSITION, SELDOM  
 EQUALLED, AND PERHAPS NEVER EXCEEDED.

TO SUCH OUR SAVIOUR SAID  
 "COME YE BLESSED OF MY FATHER,  
 INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU."

On the reverse side is the brief but emphatic Scriptural motto :—

"BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD."



Encircling the base of the tomb are laid freshly culled flowers—for I find upon observation that they are renewed daily; an offering—whether regarded as a tribute of affection, or one of deep respect from those to whom the kindest of mistresses had endeared herself—alike gratifying to the eye and the mind of all who are in the genial ranks of those that rejoice in the belief or the experience of those women “whose price is far above rubies”—of one whose “husband’s heart doth safely trust in her”—who “will do him good and not evil all the days of her life”—who openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in whose tongue is the law of kindness”—“whose children arise up and call her blessed—her husband also and he praiseth her.”

With that genial corps, how happily you, my dear Sisters, in whom “the heart of our dead Mother” seems yet to breathe—living examples, had I none other in your sex, upon which to found my creed, and confirm my faith—have ensured me the fulness of gratifying sympathy.

\* \* \* \* \*

BELIEVE ME, EVER YOUR AFFECTIONATE BROTHER,

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